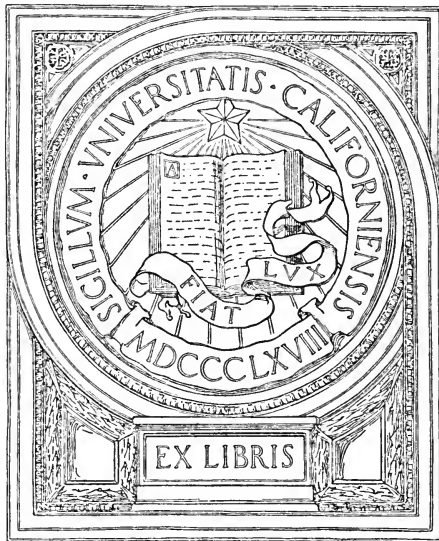




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ART CRAFTS FOR AMATEURS.

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## THE TRAINING OF A CRAFTSMAN.

By FRED MILLER. With 161 Illustrations by various workers in the Art Crafts. CONTENTS: The Craftsman and Nature—Design and Craftsmanship—Metal Work—Repoussé and Fine Metal Work—Wrought Iron—Jewelry—Enameling—Potters and Painters—Glass Painters—Wood-Carvers—Bookbinders—Women Workers in the Art Crafts—Surface Decoration—Wall Papers and Textiles—The Craftsman of To Day.

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TRUSLOVE, HANSON & COMBA, Ltd.,

67 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.

ART CRAFTS

FOR

AMATEURS

BY

FRED MILLER

AUTHOR OF

The TRAINING OF A CRAFTSMAN, ETC.

WITH

NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS



TRUSLOVE, HANSON & COMBA Ltd.  
NEW YORK & LONDON

1901

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M5

TO ALL  
SUBJECTS

11/10/1944

Revised 11/10/44

## TO THE READER.

THE scope of this book is indicated by the title, but though addressed to amateurs it might serve as a text-book to those who intend to make Art-work their calling, for often the only line of demarcation between amateur and professional is that the latter makes a business of what the former does as a recreation. The author's aim has been to take the leading art-crafts, and to approach them, from two points of view—that of the practice of them and that of scheming for and designing for them. Many useful hints and suggestions of a practical nature can be imparted by a practical worker in writing to those who have made a start, or even to those who are about to begin ; while in the matter of design this can be dealt with in a yet more emphatic way by the help of illustrations, and the publishers have allowed the author to be prodigal in this matter, there being no less than 178 in the present work, gathered from many sources, and giving examples of craftsmen of very divergent tendencies ; for it was no part of the author's plan to select examples in which certain well-defined ideas found expression, as though there were one way only : in the craftsman's world are many mansions.



Two visits to the Paris Exhibition, which was, indeed, a microcosm of human endeavour, enabled the author to widen his outlook, and by enlarging the scope of his inquiries make the following pages, therefore, of more interest to the reader, as the newer tendencies stirring craftsmen abroad have been touched upon.

This work is published three years after the author's "Training of a Craftsman," which might be considered a sequel to the present book, and to which he refers those readers who, having followed the writer with some pleasure and profit to themselves, would like to carry their studies further.

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# ART CRAFTS FOR AMATEURS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE AMATEUR AS DESIGNER : A METHOD OF STUDY.

 WIDESPREAD and increasing interest is now taken in the art crafts, and the more than creditable work shown every year at the Albert Hall, under the auspices of the Home Arts Association, each exhibition being an advance upon the previous one, is evidence that this interest is not a mere abstraction of the nature of counsels of perfection, but a vital impulse that finds very capable expression. I have placed here some specimens of the work executed under the direction of the Home Arts Association, or at all events the outcome of this movement to develop the hand-cunning of villagers, and I think it will be acknowledged that astonishing progress has been made since the Association began its work. The painting of flowers and sketching from nature, that were the accomplishments of the more educated among us half-a-century ago, have given place to work in which craftsmanship

is brought into play, or where the hand is exercised to a fuller extent than the head and heart. Lest I should be misunderstood in this remark, let us contrast wood carving, a typical craft as well as a favourite one with amateurs, with water-colour sketching. The time occupied in scheming out a design is small in comparison with the time taken in carving it: the finger-skill or hand-cunning is of more importance than the purely mental qualities called into play in designing the work to be wrought, and it is for this reason that there are many more people to be found who can carve a creditable panel than make a sketch of equal excellence in its particular way; the sketch demanding much delicacy of perception and finesse, which come partly from temperament and partly to very strenuous endeavour and long practice.

It is therefore a wise step to give up trying to paint very poor pictures and to engage in one of the many crafts within the reach and compass of amateurs. In these pages I address myself mainly to those who have started work, but require a helping hand, and that mainly as to what to do and what is best worth doing, though I venture to hope I may be of some helpfulness to the mere beginner.

So many amateurs soon come to pause for the want of a little directing as to what sort of designs they shall carry out. Undoubtedly what every amateur should strive for is to make his own designs, for truly a design should grow under the fingers, evolve as the hands manipulate the tools, and it is a drawback to have a set design before one which has to be literally adhered to. The best work is that which grows under the craftsman's hand, for it is well-nigh impossible for anyone to see what should be done from the beginning; it



must be evolved as the work proceeds. A sketch is much what the heads of a sermon are to the delivered oration.

If the craftsman were in every sense the author of the work, it would gain both in interest and character, and to that end I shall hope to direct particular attention in these



No. 1.—Beaten Copper Mirror Frame (Fivemiletown, Co. Tyrone).  
This and the four following cuts show the excellent work produced in villages and small towns by amateur craftsmen.

pages to the matter of design, and it is a reasonable hope that this book may not only stimulate, but help those workers who peruse it to carry out their own ideas instead of merely executing what some one else has invented. As I am responsible for a proportion of the designs given in

these pages, it may not be out of place to say that my chief object in giving them is that they may do something to elucidate the text and help the reader to tread with somewhat surer footing the slippery pathway of the art he has essayed to follow. I am very conscious of the shortcomings of many of the designs, but no worker is called upon to use them further than they may be of suggestive value to him. Treat these drawings as raw material which every worker can use in his own way: no harm will then befall anyone, and some of my efforts may thus be of value in suggesting ideas and schemes which can be fashioned and shaped by "the tools' true play." All mere drawings of this nature, destined to be carried out by the crafts, suffer from this disadvantage, that they in no sense give the slightest idea of the appearance of the completed work itself. A design for a carved panel and a photograph of the panel when carved, are two very different things, and as there are many examples scattered through these pages engraved from photographs of the actual objects, they, by contrast, make the mere drawings for the same crafts appear exceedingly thin and commonplace. This is not said to excuse deficiencies, but to warn the reader that only the bare facts can be given in a sketch—the charm of workmanship, the beauty of surface, tooling, and all that goes to make craftsmanship is wanting. It is much as though we took the plot of *Ivanhoe* and gave it to a person, expecting them to judge of the novel by this mere catalogue of names and incidents.

The tendency of all designs for the crafts is to be wanting in simplicity, and this I think comes about through the desire of the designer to make a pretty-looking drawing.

Just as the synopsis of a story seems very bald and commonplace when printed, so does a sketch made for any craft look thin and empty, and yet if carried out this very poor-looking drawing would in all likelihood be far more effective and suited to the craft than a highly ornate one. Were we just to draw in outline some of the photographs in these pages, which, taken direct from the objects themselves, give



No. 2.—Oak Chest. Locking Class, under Miss Gimingham.

some slight sense of the beauty of material in which they are wrought and the skill of the hand that fashioned them, we should find that there would be a great want of charm in them. Point can be given to this remark by instancing a line tooled on leather, and one drawn on paper. Draw on paper a choice binding, and it resembles the work itself

about as much as a phonograph does the song or playing it records.

The publishers have been lavish in the matter of illustrations, and have allowed me to give a very large number of examples. It is only possible to do this and keep the book at a moderate price where a large stock of blocks can be drawn upon. In fact, it is only since blocks have been made by the half-tone process direct from photographs of actual work that a book such as this could be issued. In making the selection of illustrations I have endeavoured to be as eclectic as possible, so that craftsmanship generally can be studied, and not just one phase of it. I would carefully guard against a disposition to put forward certain styles or methods of work as a standard of excellence to which all should conform. In looking at the prize works from the schools of art throughout the country exhibited this summer at South Kensington, one was struck by the fashion there is in designs. A certain likeness was observable in a number of the sketches which one could trace to their source, and though this tendency may be inevitable, it does not appear to me one to be encouraged. Style is individuality, and though this is a well-worn maxim it is nevertheless constantly being ignored by teachers and professors. The contemplation of examples, however excellent they be, if it lead to the exclusion of personality and character, is detrimental to the work of the student. Greek art is perfect in its way, but what a stagnation and dry up of all that makes work interesting and vital ensued from a slavish adherence to what were termed canons of taste, said to be derived from a study of classical examples. There is no longer any art salvation in the acanthus leaf or honeysuckle border; we

must go to fresh sources of inspiration ; if need were, track the unknown, for the well-worn pathway has become too polished for us to find foothold. Did not the time come in English painting for a departure from the schools, and hence the pre-Raphaelite movement which led the student to contemplate some earlier masters than Raphael?



No. 3.—Embossed Copper Work.  
By the Yattendon Class, under Mrs. Waterhouse.

I was severely rebuked by one critic who reviewed my former work, *The Training of a Craftsman*, for my advocacy of individuality in art, making it the expression of one's ego. "A lot of young men and women doing what they think is right in their own eyes forsooth!" Would

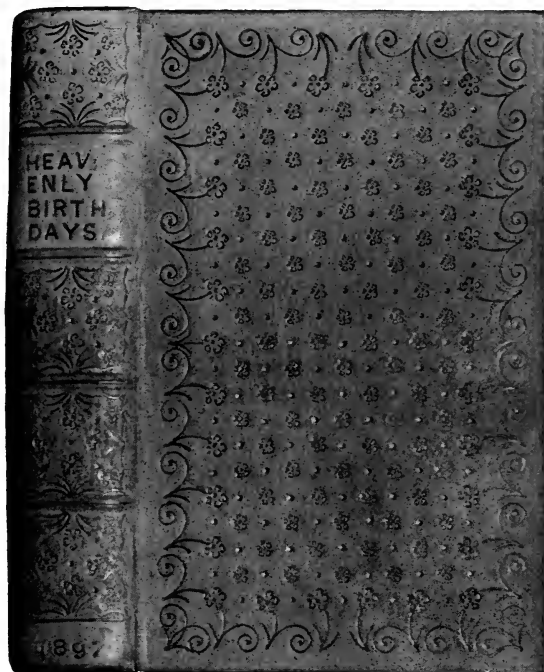
these same young men and women be any more interesting if they slavishly conformed to certain canons, the said canons being the learned professor's conception of what art should be? It is obvious enough that genius is a rare thing, but we all have that within us which makes us different in some way from other people, and slight as this personality may be, it should surely find expression and not be sneered out of existence by some superior person who can only move and think by precedent. The Chinese have gone on through the centuries contemplating and studying their nine classics, but what advance do they make?

We must be constantly breaking fresh ground if our crops are not to deteriorate, and though what is grown on the new soil may at first be a little coarse, that is better surely than the attenuation of over-cultivation and emasculation through loss of virility; for art, like people, can be bred out of all use.

Vigour, character, even barbarity and crudity, are better qualities in art than a suave conventional perfection, the hard polish, the splendidly null. The art that is most stimulating to study is the art of savages, or at all events of primitive peoples. The more civilised nations become the more conventional becomes the expression of their emotions, and we need to get down to the bed-rock of human nature if we are to receive the most vital stimulus that the study of other work can give. The art turned out by schools is generally speaking deadening in its regulated, codified perfection; it just lacks the "savageness" which lays hold of one as the tiger's paw does its prey.

Let us reverence and love old work. Having spent a good deal of time in museums I may claim to have some

slight acquaintance with much that is good : my advice to my readers is by all means study old work ; go where it is to be seen, draw specimens that appeal to you, but avoid imitating it. Try and do something on your own, and to



No. 4.—Tooled Bookbinding.

By the Leighton Buzzard Class, under Miss Bassett.

keep your soul sweet, never cease going to the fountain head, Nature, for she, after all, is the source of all inspiration. You can exhaust everything else but her. Always be on the look out for agreeable lines, pleasant shapes ; keep on



the alert for striking combinations ; ideas may come to one at any moment, suggested by the most unlikely material. It is true that the basis of ornament is plant-form, and more ideas may come to one through that source than any other, but a suggestion for the planning and arranging of your material may come from a fish's bone, a bird's wing, the markings on a moth, as I have endeavoured to show in my *Training of a Craftsman*. Therefore the worker should make a practice of sketching from nature—not merely plant form, but any form. A note should at once be made when an idea or suggestion comes to one, so treacherous is the memory ; and remember this, that by cultivating a faculty you not only increase its receptiveness, but also its activity. You may start by having no ideas, and yet by degrees, by getting the mind travelling that way, astonish yourself by your fertility of resource. It is another instance of a waste place blossoming as the rose. The great difficulty we all experience is to start the mind, to overcome the inertia due to inactivity. It is something like getting a gas engine to move which has been cold for a long time ; overcome the initial difficulty and it will work away right well.

It is easy to adapt a design drawn for one kind of work to fit it for some other, but where this is done the alterations must be made with circumspection, for nothing is in worse taste than to see, say, the effect of tooled leather, produced by inlaying. Those who work in leather soon learn to know what can best be done by tooling just as those who inlay learn to appreciate the effects given by letting in coloured woods in a panel ; and that brings us back once more to our former position, the desirability of each worker being the designer of his own handiwork instead of working

fettered by having the ideas of another imposed upon him.



No. 5.—Oak Settle in the Swan Hotel, Southwold.  
Southwold School of Industrial Art.

With regard to fashion in design which I touched upon in a former paragraph, no one can help being influenced by

the work one admires around him; but there gets to be a feeling abroad that, because a very dominating personality works in a particular way, that is the only excellent way of working. What so often happens is that the followers of a strong personality imitate their master's weaknesses and leave out the qualities that make him a master mind. It is as unfortunate as it is true that the affectations and conventionalities are the qualities seized upon and perpetuated by pupils, while the spirit denominating the whole is lost sight of. Just as we quicker see the faults and failings of our friends than their excellencies, so we lay hold of the mere surface trickery of artists and think that, because we get the knack of reproducing that side of the man, we *must* be making progress. Set no one up as a master, be no man's pupil, but a student of the world with all that is of good report under one's purview. One's equilibrium is thus preserved when many influences are pulling at one. Study what you most affect is well-worn but very excellent advice, for there are always those who wish to force upon one sets of principles, and who at once enunciate canons which they would have us receive as infallible dogmas just because they have a penchant for certain old work. Think of the books that in one's youth came to one with an overwhelming recommendation which our own feelings did not endorse, so that much of one's time was spent in trying to like that which one's ego rebelled at. My own experience is that it is only after years of study one learns to see the transcendent qualities in the very work one is expected to venerate at the outset of one's career: those classical examples which it was more the custom in the past than it is now to force upon the tyro's attention. Were I to be

planning out the training of a student in the crafts I should devote much more time to work direct from nature than



No. 6.—Carved Wood Panel.  
Welbeck Class ; designed by Joseph Phillips.

seeing nature through the eyes of other folk, which is what

we do when we accept others' rendering of what is seen. And for the amateur who follows a craft as a pleasant recreation, a hobby in which he can forget some of the miseries and disappointments of life, man being a tool-using animal who should rejoice in his labour, that being his portion, he should certainly be influenced from within rather than from without, and do that which he feels rather than what someone else tells him he should feel. While any work is in progress try and visit a museum where good examples in that particular craft are to be seen. It is wonderful how helpful a museum is when one visits it for a definite purpose ; so different to the feeling one experiences when one walks around with no motive to direct one's gaze to anything in particular.

In the following pages we will give some individual attention to the leading art-crafts, and the best way, it seems to me, to set about imparting knowledge is to treat the reader as an apprentice, and let him pick up the dodges, wrinkles, or whatever you like to term the helps the professional worker resorts to, and for the want of which the amateur is so severely handicapped.

## CHAPTER II.

### WOOD CARVING.



HAVE chosen Wood Carving for our first practical lesson owing to its undoubted popularity among nonprofessional workers ; and the reason for this is not far to seek. It is a craft calling into play the utmost amount of resource and hand-cunning, as well as dexterity in the use of tools, while it does not leave out the higher attributes of fancy, ingenuity, and even imagination itself, wherewith to direct the fingers, and the "trick of the tools' true play." Casaubon in "Middlemarch" was recommended to take up turning as a relaxation to his serious and brain-wearing pursuit of discovering the "key to all the mythologies": wood carving would probably have suited him better as being more "brainy" than turning, without being too serious a strain upon the nerves.

I assume that most of my readers *are* craftsmen, for it is not the intention of this work to give preliminary instruction so much as to direct their work, to suggest various methods of treating the material, how the amateur can best utilise his energy, and turn his labour to advantage, though at the end of the chapter will be found a few hints useful to those starting work for the first time. Above all I wish to help him to original efforts by essaying to show him how nature may be adapted to the requirements of each craft, to the end that all workers may be able to express their

individuality instead of being content to be copyists or reproducers of the work of other minds and hands. For



No. 7.—Sketch design for carved table-top in which the Vine is used as the motif. The work is kept entirely flat, the effect being obtained chiefly by the “grounding out,” for beyond the veining of the leaves, and the slight cutting away of one form to give relief to another coming against it, the actual carving ends there. It would be possible to treat this design as a carving in low relief. By planning the design geometrically it matters not from which side it is seen.

surely every one desires to be original, to express the ideas which are born in his brain—his ego, as it is termed. But to originate one's own designs is for most 'amateurs *the*



difficulty, and comparatively few attempt it because they are not directed how to set about it; yet it is by no means easy to obtain designs. The few that are to be purchased are too often quite unworthy the labour involved in carrying them out, and it always seems to me a grievous waste of time to merely employ the fingers, to lavish a high degree of skill upon a poor or unsuitable design.

We know that there is nothing new under the sun, and it is given to very few to make a fresh departure in any branch of work. But it is possible to see old things in a new way, and by colouring them with our personality to give them new life. Old work, so powerful a source of inspiration and stimulus to most of us, instead of being servilely reproduced can be adapted and altered, and by passing through our brain and receiving the impress of ourselves, comes out of our minds' mint with a new superscription: we shall mark it, in fact.

The vine design, for instance, No. 7, was suggested by a panel of old German carving; yet the departures made are sufficiently important to enable men to claim it as original. One engineer friend who has made wood carving his hobby, and has obtained considerable skill in the use of tools, gets his designs by taking rubbings of old carving he meets with in churches; but unless one exercises some skill in the selection and arrangement of such material, it is apt to look scrappy and wanting in unity of design. It is essential in planning out an idea to have some notion of how the work will look as a whole, some central scheme which ties the work together and gives it a *one-ness*. It is no use thinking of details until the main lines of the work are securely laid, and this plan of carving bits and then putting them

all together later on cannot lead to the best results. Take the examples of seventeenth-century carving in Nos. 8 and 9



- No. 8.—These two fragments from the Pulpit in the no-longer-existing Church of St. Mildred, in the Poultry, London, are very characteristic of the time. The carving is in considerable relief, so that it can be undercut. The “frame,” which was the border to each panel, would make a very good picture-frame, as the design is admirably adapted to wood carving. The fruit festoons are met with in all work which has been classed as “Grinling Gibbons.”

from the pulpit of St. Mildred's Church (now no more), and it

will be seen that there is this unity or one-ness I just spoke of.



No. 9.—Pulpit from the Church of St. Mildred's, which formerly stood in the Poultry, showing the general design. Portions of the work on a larger scale are given in No. 8.

I must be pardoned for referring to my own work as a designer, but illustrations in such a work being as important as the letterpress, feeble as one's efforts may be, one can better illustrate one's own ideas, than find them illustrated for one. Moreover I do not give them as showing *the* only way, but merely one way of treating wood, leaving each reader to take and reject what he will. He can adapt me just as I adapt material I come across. Wood carving has been so trammelled by the past that few carvers have had the courage to seek to get out of the-groove of precedent. This bondage of the past is sadly hampering to anything like originality. What we want now is work of to-day, the style of the nineteenth century instead of thirteenth century Gothic, Cinquecento, François I. and the rest of the "Schools." In my *Training of a Craftsman* (H. Virtue and Company, Limited, 1897), I have exalted the ego above all tradition and that adherence to precedent which so checks all original impulse, and to the amateur I say emphatically, let your work be yourself: it is better that it should be that, and even rococo, than very chaste and in "perfect style," but a shadow of some one else.

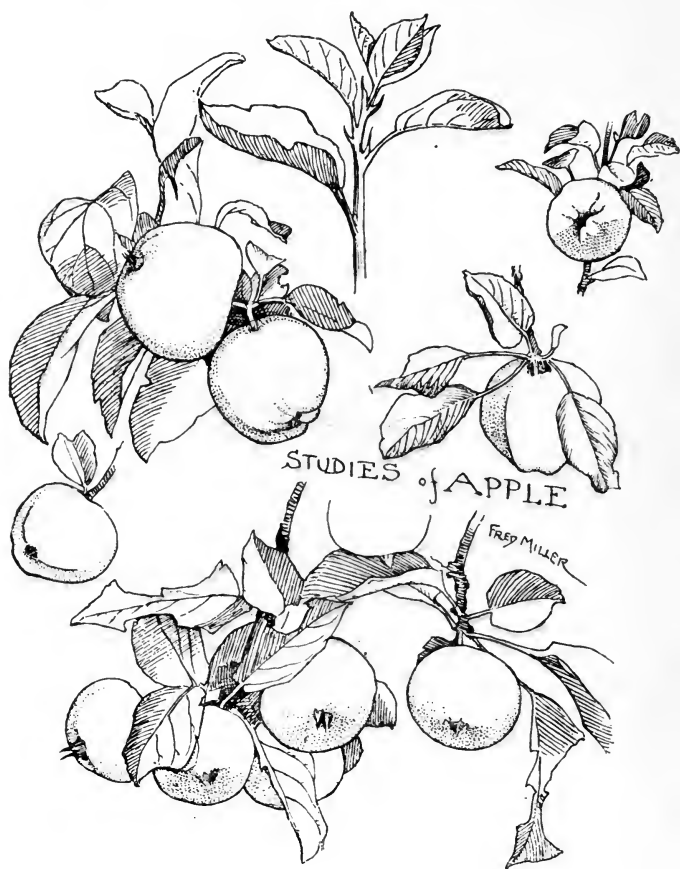
I am no purist in the matter of style. Learn of every one, study in all schools, but copy no one. We are constantly having a critic starting up and claiming his *one* way of looking at nature and rendering his impressions as *the* way. There is no one way: there are at least, according to Rudyard Kipling, nine-and-sixty. I am Gothic in sentiment, and for many years was blinded to the work which for convenience is grouped under the head of Renaissance. Yet the three old examples of wood carving I give are all of the latter school, and I have done this with intention, for so

much amateur carving is merely a servile copy of Gothic work wherein the letter is seen, the spirit having escaped,



No. 10.—This is a rough sketch of a portion of the carved panels forming the Screen in Trinity College, Oxford. The workmanship is as fine as anything I know, and the whole being pierced, has a light and elegant appearance which is delightful. The design is very intricate, but the ingenuity with which the curves play into each other evinces much skill and resource. The wreaths and festoons are good instances of the seventeenth-century “conceits” so often met with in the decoration of the time. The introduction of angels’ heads gives a human interest to the work.

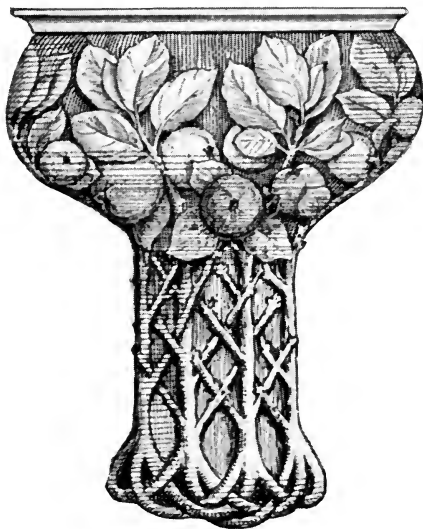
that it appeared likely to lead to more useful ends to examine the work which is considered to be opposed to the Gothic



No. 11.—Nature Notes used in making Designs 6 and 7. It will be noticed that apples are anything but round, and their angular nature should be made a feature of in a carving based on the apple. "Truth to nature" is being true to the growth of the plant you base your design upon, however much you may ornamentalise certain features of the plant. If you depart from nature, be sure that you gain thereby.

tradition. The examples are so characteristic as well as excellent in themselves that that was quite sufficient reason to warrant me giving them had I no other. While a study of Gothic will give our work robustness, virility, and a feeling for nature, a study say of the screen by Grinling Gibbons—a fragment of which I give a sketch of in No. 10—will teach us grace and balance, a feeling for curves and ingenuity in the interweaving of scrolls; while the original at Oxford will reveal to us the possibilities of wood under the hands of a craftsman who could hold a gouge with a skill and un-

hesitating assurance—a contemptuous indifference—which makes him one of the greatest of English carvers. Yet because much of Gibbons' work is of the "papery" finicking order, best styled rococo, some present-day craftsmen pretend to see nothing but what is bad in it. There may be



No. 12.—Carved Lamp Bracket, treated with decorative adaptation of the apple in low relief. The stems are highly ornamented, but in other respects nature is followed.

no further any artistic salvation in the acanthus leaf in design, all that that mine could yield having been worked out until no ore remains for us, but it is a wilful narrowing of our sympathies to shut out from our purview the work of such a genius as this great seventeenth-century carver.

The two fragments, No. 8, from the pulpit in the no-

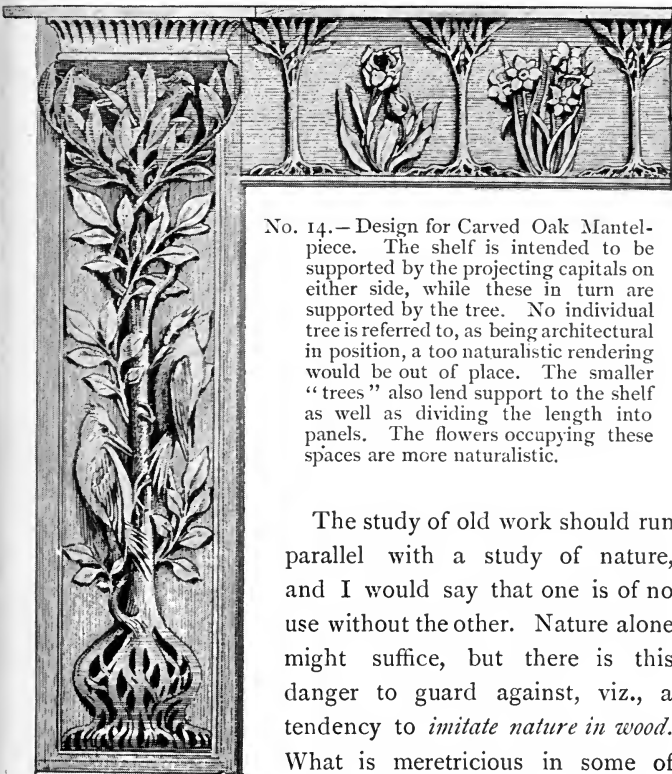


No. 13.—Clock Bracket. The introduction of the flowers in the bracket portion is a decorative “conceit,” though it is often possible to find an apple tree flowering and fruiting at the same time, while in such plants as the blackberry and orange it is the usual course: it is left to the designer to select his example, as well as his point of view.

longer-existing Church of St. Mildred’s, show the festoon conceit adapted to a pilaster. A central rod supports the flowers and fruit, which are attached to it by ribbons, while an undulating scroll of foliage twists around it. The frame is one which has often been worked, and will continue to



be carved, as it is so thoroughly adapted to the needs of the carver, as the designs seem *to swell out* of the moulding. Many modifications of it are possible.



No. 14.—Design for Carved Oak Mantel-piece. The shelf is intended to be supported by the projecting capitals on either side, while these in turn are supported by the tree. No individual tree is referred to, as being architectural in position, a too naturalistic rendering would be out of place. The smaller "trees" also lend support to the shelf as well as dividing the length into panels. The flowers occupying these spaces are more naturalistic.

The study of old work should run parallel with a study of nature, and I would say that one is of no use without the other. Nature alone might suffice, but there is this danger to guard against, viz., a tendency to *imitate nature in wood*. What is meretricious in some of Gibbons' work is that when he refers

directly to nature he is content to attempt to *imitate* his forms in wood, as though he were modelling wax flowers. Wood carving is not imitation, but carrying out a

design, which is in itself an effort of the imagination, in wood by means of certain tools, the true use of which has to be acquired by much practice, and to learn how to adapt nature to the needs of the craft you follow\* is to learn how to design.

There is no mystery in designing, as some appear to think ; it is merely an adaptation of means to end. A good many amateurs never attempt to design for themselves because of a certain mysteriousness, as they think, involved in the effort. Let us look a little closer into this, and see what is involved in making a design.

We will start with nature, and I give in No. 11 a few outline studies of the apple, taken from one of my sketch-books, as a help to any one desirous of carrying out the lamp bracket (No. 12), or the clock bracket (No. 13), both of which are treated with a suggestion of the apple.

There is no reason why we should ever tell an untruth in a design, however much we may twist and pull nature about to suit our fancy or the exigency of the piece of work we have in hand. The growth of the leaves around the base of the stalks and their growth upon terminal branches can be told in our carving as truthfully as in a pencil study, but we let our fancy loose in the way we twist the stems or branches, arrange where the flowers and fruit are to come, and in the way we simplify the details so that we can render them adequately with the means at our command. It is obvious, for instance, that we must depart from nature by simplifying her, or how shall we render the stamens in the middle of the flower? and our taste as well as ingenuity is shown in the way we do this simplifying. I do not wish to more than allude in passing to my own work, lest some

reader should come to think the way *I* have used nature *the* way, but it is pretty plain that I believe in going direct to nature for inspiration, and a free adaptation of nature is the one I should say is most likely to lead to original work on the part of the amateur. And let me add, too, that he should not rely upon books of studies or photographs of plants, but should study nature for himself, to the extent of making studies of suggestive forms in pencil or other medium. Poor as such studies may be (though with a little practice I see no reason why they should be poor) compared with the skilled work one sees in books, you will never get to know a plant except by drawing it, and that, too, many times. Take the shape of an apple, how various it is! What beautiful angles its sides make! How "square" rather than round it is! How truthful



No. 15.—Sketch of one of the Choir Stalls in Cockayne Hatley Church, Bedfordshire. The fine carving in this church was brought from Italy early in this century. It probably dates from the early part of the sixteenth century, and is very characteristic in style, and fine in execution.

you can be with advantage as you carve each apple,



No. 16.—Studies helpful in bird carving, adapted from Japanese carvings in very low relief. An ornamental treatment is necessary if birds are to keep their place in carving. The wings and tail lend themselves to a highly ornamental treatment, as can be seen in the diagram.

getting no two exactly alike! If you try to carve your

apples without reference to nature, how tame, because mechanical, will the result be! Where the work of other men and times may be of help is in suggesting how you

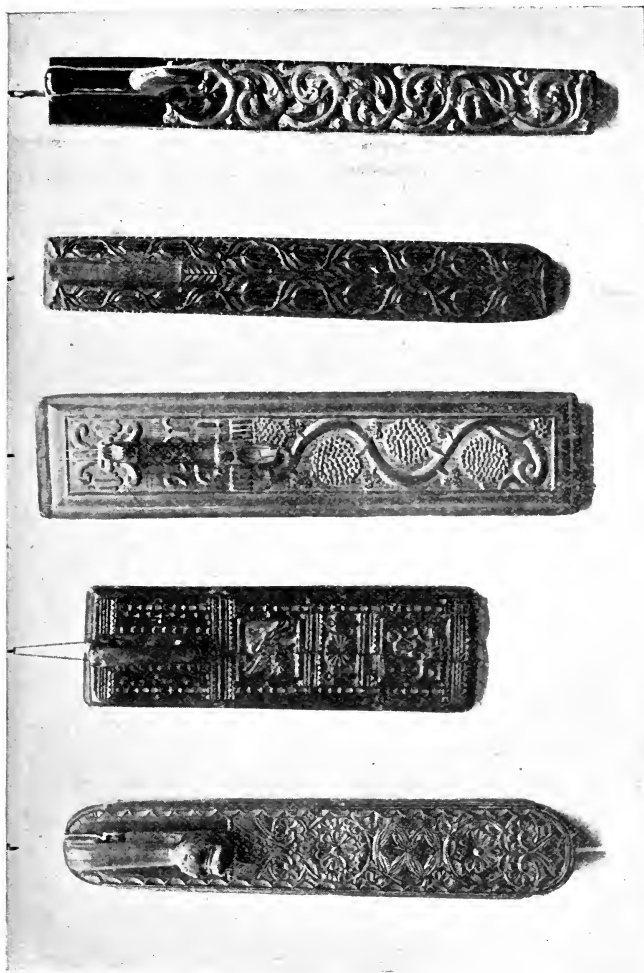


No. 17.—Beer Jugs, Flat Bread Box, and Cheese Box, from S etersdal and Thelemark. Good examples of simple patterns well adapted to their purpose.

may pull and twist nature into quaint and cunning devices. If we look at the screen (No. 10) we find Gibbons did not evolve a design logically from some one

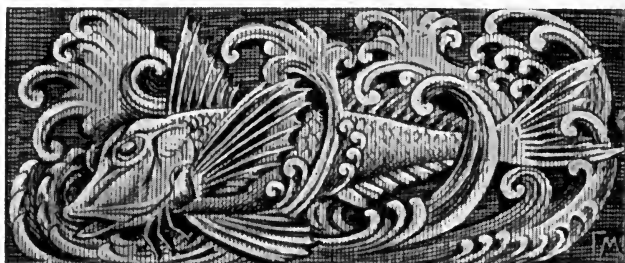
plant, but he weaves together two or more distinct *motifs*. The scroll-work is evolved by the fancy of the artist, though the acanthus-like leaves show that such scroll-work was the common property of the time. But at the top he introduces two wreaths, one of laurel and one of blossoms, held up by ribbons, while lower down festoons of flowers naturally treated are suspended from the scrolls. These *motifs* are purely artificial arrangements, "conceits" we might term them, and some might hesitate to copy them. I lean to a design which is evolved from nature, like the vine in No. 7, without the introduction of such "conceits"; for though the tendrils and the main stem are highly ornamentalised, and the grapes introduced more as a background than as bunches of fruit, no artificial *motifs*, as the wreaths and ribbons, are imported into the scheme; and yet in the same breath I must confess to a fondness for the "festoon," which is certainly a conceit.

There is no more difficult subject to write about than design. Its principles, if it has any, elude analysis, while as for professing to teach it, I would as lief attempt to make a poet. You might produce a versifier and you might teach a student a certain number of "conceits" in design, but designing is as much a mental attribute as an ear for music. It is directed by feeling and intuition, and conditioned by our point of view, and cannot be taught, though various books profess to do so. Still, as I have just endeavoured to show, there is no mystery about it, and anyone can start to adapt some natural form to suit the shape of the article and the method employed in producing it, and by degrees he will gain confidence and cultivate an eye for agreeable lines, curves, and shapes.



No. 18.—Hand Mangles, Norway. The admirable character of these examples makes them well worth studying.

Hand-cunning, however, can be taught, and I would recommend any one wishing for instruction in the use of tools, and how to set about carving, to get a few lessons of a practical carver, and then work on, beginning with simple work like the vine, No. 7, in which the "grounding out" is the most important part of the work, the actual carving being confined to taking down a form coming under another one, and here and there taking out a vein in the leaves



No. 19.—Panel of Gurnard and water, treated Japanesque'y for low relief. The Japanese treatment of water, as of other forms, is most ingeniously ornamental, and is valuable as a course of study by all wood-carvers. The Japanese appear to think, or to see, all objects in what we call a decorative way, *i.e.*, they develop the ornamental possibilities of the object, or else simplify it by showing great restraint in rendering it.

(though this must not be overdone, for there must be no attempt to give the appearance of "real" leaves). I like to see a certain severity, even a touch of the barbarian, about wood carving. I hate work which is as smooth as wax, and where every roughness and tool mark is polished away. Let the tool marks show. In the apples, for instance, don't get the smoothness of a real apple, but give the contour by a series of well-directed angular cuts, equivalent to the



facets of a gem. Crisp, nervous, vigorous cutting is what is wanted if your work is to look "alive." The work that palls upon one is that in which all is suave, genteel, decorous; where nature is suggested as successfully as in a waxen effigy.

In the illustrations I have drawn, it has been my endeavour to give variety of subject as well as of treatment, beginning with flat work, as in No. 7, suitable for a table top, which would practise one in "grounding out," going on to the two brackets Nos. 12 and 13, which are in relief, though not in very high relief, and then the mantelpiece No. 14, where the work is still in low relief. The shelf in this design is intended to be supported by two projecting brackets at either end, and these would of course be carved out of two distinct blocks of wood, shaped for the purpose.

The stem of the "tree" in each pilaster supports these brackets, which are carved with leaves, and behind I have indicated a bird nesting—a conceit, though a natural one. The smaller trees under the shelf could also project further than the flowers between them to help support the shelf. The roots are



No. 20. — Design for carved  
Bellows Front in high relief.  
For the head refer to No. 15.

developed, as will be noticed, into an ornamental feature. There is nothing in the arrangement of this design that



No. 21.—Design for carved Bellows Front. The bird, a conventional rendering of the long-eared owl, in high relief. A quaint, rather than a pretty, naturalistic rendering of birds or other animal forms is generally to be preferred. The Gothic grotesques are a good example to have before one in this class of work.

should be beyond the scope of an amateur, for of invention, *i.e.*, something evolved by a pure effort of the imagination, there is but little. What ornamental features there are is due to dividing up the spaces to be treated into panels, and developing such parts of the plant as the roots, emphasising any ornamental suggestiveness that nature hints at. A free treatment of foliage, as in the upright panel and the dividing trees, is always effective in carving, and a shrub like the Portugal laurel could be taken as the type, while such well-known flowers as the Tulip, Narcissus, and Iris are used to fill in the spaces at top, these being treated somewhat more naturally to contrast with the severer character of the "trees" dividing the space into panels, no direct reference

to any particular tree being made: these may be taken as a type of growth rather than the representation of an indi-

vidual plant, which is not the case with the flowers occupying the intervals. Plenty of wood should be removed in carrying out this design, and I may remark that amateurs too often leave too much wood, a sure way to produce heaviness and clumsiness. Your carving should lie lightly and gracefully upon the surface of your panel, and this means "shifting" a good deal of your background.

In all work it is important to bear in mind the desirability of obtaining relief by not getting the same class of *motifs* all over the work. These "trees," therefore, I have just referred to, should be treated ornamentally (even the roots become ornament). The side panels again are much less naturalistic as they occupy an architectural position in the design, carrying as they do the shelf, while the "sprigs" can be much more naturalesque. The birds (suggested by the woodpecker) I have introduced to give a point of interest and to break up the upright line of the trunk. Some carvers may prefer the panel minus the birds: it would be easy to leave them out and substitute leaves. The panel on the other side might have a squirrel or birds, like the nuthatch, for it is an indication of mental poverty to repeat such emphatic forms as birds. You may repeat forms which nearly approach pure ornament, but not such forms as birds, which, as a rule, are introduced to give variety to the design, nor should the flowers be repeated, for it is so easy to select a fresh one for each space.

Personally, I like the introduction of animal forms in carving: I prefer them, indeed, to the human figure, because too often the latter is so badly done—an insult to man, in fact. Gibbons and his contemporaries were fond of introducing angels' heads, and very beautifully they carved them.

Those on the choir stalls at Cockayne Hatley Church, No. 15, are exquisitely wrought, though the drawing only indicates the main features of the carving. The treatment of the wings is particularly happy, and might, to a skilful carver, suggest a treatment of chair arms.



No. 22.— Picture Frame after the style of Grinling Gibbons.  
Early Eighteenth Century.

My advice to amateurs is, don't attempt the human figure unless you feel up to it ; keep to foliage and ornament until you can venture on an animal form, and then if you feel confident in your powers essay a child's head, and then be

sure and make a few studies from a living child. One sculptor I know finds photographs of children very useful in modelling heads. I should say that Reynolds' "Angels' Heads" in the National Gallery, and, indeed, his children generally, would be still more helpful, as the painter has simplified nature in his paintings, which would be a distinct help to the carver, for your carved head should be the antithesis of a wax doll, which attempts to give a counterfeit or imitation of nature. You are carving a piece of wood shaped like a head, and this needs treatment, or how are you going to render the hair? for this cannot be imitated any more than the eyes can. It is the old story of knowing what to leave out or throw away; it means restraint, selection, power to seize on essentials, and ignore that which is accidental.

In carving animal forms, one of the great difficulties is in knowing how to render textures. Hair, feathers, scales are not to be copied, you have to translate them into the language of wood. I thought it might be a little help to show how the Japanese carve such forms as wings, and in No. 16 will be seen some adaptations of Japanese work. A wing, when we analyse its structure, becomes a very ornamental form, and, if so looked at, may be an interesting feature in carving. It is a good general principle to direct the student to develop all ornamental suggestions wherever found. The hair of a child's head must be thought of as a series of curved forms, *and not as so many hairs*. A wing, again, is an arrangement of feathers, and not a fluffy bewildering mass of down. Hair, again, must be indicated where we should put a little shadow if we were drawing the object, and not by roughing the surface all over with lines.

But when all is said, rendering surfaces is a difficulty which can only be overcome by considerable practice directed by a sense of fitness, which is what taste in wood carving amounts to. Just as the artist learns what to leave out, so the carver has to learn how he best can



No. 23.—Tuscan Mirror Frame. Sixteenth Century. The festoon border is characteristic of the time, but it has become, by much repetition, a trifle tiresome.

translate what he knows into the language of his craft. That this is *not* done by imitation is about the most definite counsel one can give, though it may be a great help to one, in difficulties, to go and see how some one else has worked, either to know what to avoid or what to do.

If we train our artistic perception everything in time can

be seen ornamentally. In the fish-panel, No. 19, the Japanese treatment of curling water has been followed, while the fish itself (the gurnard) has been made so ornamental by nature, that little was required to fit it for a carved panel. When you do introduce birds or other animal forms into your work, avoid getting them too pretty, as though they were Christmas cards. The quaint and grotesque is so much more effective in carving than the pretty-pretty. I would sooner have ugly carving than genteel. The mediæval monster turned into a water-spout is much more attractive to many than a wax doll, however beautifully modelled and coloured the latter may be. Let us get a little of the savage into our work rather than too much refinement—at least, that is my taste. The specimens of Norwegian work, Nos. 17 and 18, are worth studying in this connection as its archaicism gives it character ; moreover, the wood is admirably treated, just so much being done as gives the surface interest and no more.

In sketching out a design, work full size on brown paper in charcoal, using it freely and seeing that the principal lines are happily placed, that the curves flow easily and are not broken-backed, and then you can begin placing the important details, afterwards adding the minor ones. The use of white chalk will enable you to get the appearance of roundness, and you can gauge to some extent the effect of your work. I say to some extent, for no drawing can render the effect of carving, and I have made no attempt to get this quality into my sketches, as I wanted them to be as plain as diagrams, so that the reader can see the details.

One well-known carver told me that he finds his men work better from rough charcoal sketches than from modelled patterns, as the cartoon does not trammel them as modelled

sketches do ; besides, while you are modelling your patterns you could half carve them, and to save time is surely an object with amateurs.

In planning a large work such as a mantel-piece don't think of details until your spaces have been divided up and the constructive lines and forms arranged for. Referring once more to No. 14, it will be seen that, there being a shelf to support, it was of the first importance to see that our sense of security was satisfied, and to that end the tops of the side panels, equi-



No. 24.—Gothic Panel.  
(Mr. W. H. Grimwood.)

valent to the capitals of a pillar, were in higher relief than the rest, and after that the minor supports to the shelves, which also serve to break up the top of the mantel into panels or



spaces. Having settled all these main features, it is, comparatively speaking, an easy business to arrange the details.

Take the chest No. 2, or the seat No. 5, in Chapter I., and if we analyse these designs we see that the surfaces are divided up geometrically, and then the spaces are treated with appropriate ornament. If one ventured to criticise these two works one might urge that the borders on the styles around the panels in No. 5 should have been somewhat severer in character, so as to have competed less with the panels, for it is obviously a mistake to decorate every part of one's work equally. Relief and breadth of effect can only be obtained by leaving some spaces plainer than others, while in No. 2 the filling of the two panels, instead of being quite so severe, might have suggested natural growth, seeing that the niches are so architectural.

Those taking up carving should equip themselves with some good chisels and gouges, and an appliance for holding the wood while it is being worked, for no successful carving can be done without attention being paid to the mechanical side of one's work, and unless the wood one is working can be properly secured *so that it is rigid* there can be no certainty of touch, no sharpness and precision of execution, upon which so much of the quality of carving depends. Such a panel as No. 6, in Chapter I., or No. 24 are good designs to carve after some preliminary work has been undertaken, for it requires some practice to carve scrolls and curves with feeling. Much of the work on the coffer, No. 2, could be more easily wrought by a beginner, as a purely symmetrical or geometrical pattern presents fewer difficulties than a flowing design like No. 24. When we come to such a design as the mirror frame, No. 25, we

are getting into difficulties, and it is not wise to be foolishly ambitious, fail, and so be discouraged : far better gain courage by small successes. Much that is interesting to do and valued when done can be accomplished by amateurs after getting used to their tools, and acquiring some command

over them, and with the variety and wealth of examples scattered through these pages, amateurs ought not to be at a loss in knowing what they shall do.



No. 25.—Venetian Mirror Frame. Sixteenth Century. This being in high relief should not be attempted until the craftsman has had considerable practice in simpler work.

In No. 20, I give a treatment of a bellows front with a head blowing, as this suggests the purpose of the article carved. The carving is intended to be in half relief, so as to allow of some undercutting. The highest part of the ornamental wings would be in the same plane as the nose of the head, while the wood around the head

being cut away would give a depth of shadow which would greatly enhance the effect. Carving in high relief depends upon the masses of shadow—you have to think in light and shade. In No. 21 is another bellows front treated with a quaint rendering of an owl, to be carved

in high relief. Such a work would be a good preparatory study to a head, so far as manipulative skill goes, for it is obvious that the further from the flat we get in carving, and the more our work approaches the round, the more difficult is it to carve. Here some preliminary work in modelling in clay would be found helpful.

As regards wood, oak, of course, is the most popular, and for such articles as brackets and fire-places very suitable. It is a good wood to carve. Lime and sycamore were used by Gibbons for his light work: such a frame as No. 22, which is light and graceful, even fanciful in design, would probably have been carved in one of these woods. Cedar and mahogany cut well, and for frames to be gilded, good pine, free from knots, is excellent, as it can be carved with rapidity when one has acquired some command of one's tools. Such a design as No. 23, which is adapted for gilding, should be wrought in pine or other free cutting wood.

### CHAPTER III.

#### BEATEN METALWORK OR REPOUSSÉ.



HERE is no more fascinating craft the amateur can take up than work in beaten metal. Metal seems to give a distinction to a design, however poor in itself it may be. Just as a bitten or engraved line on copper has, when printed from, a quality about it which a line produced by any other means lacks, so a pattern produced by the beating up and hammering of metal has a "preciousness" which gives it an unique value, and makes the work itself of absorbing interest. So delightful is the surface produced by hammering, whether it be silver, copper, brass, pewter or steel which we work in, that there is a danger of the craftsman being indifferent as to the design he beats out, because anything looks fairly well when wrought in repoussé. We might paraphrase that couplet of Longfellow's—"Lend to the words of the poet the music of thy voice," lend to the skill and tasteful ingenuity of the designer the "preciousness" of beaten metal.

An appropriate design is one in which the peculiar qualities of beaten metal are brought into well-considered prominence, for a design should always be conditioned by the method of reproduction. Now, in repoussé we produce the design partly by beating out from the back and partly by work from the front. One can, for instance, start by

outlining the design by punching from the front, and having done this, bed the metal in pitch, and beat up some portions of the design from the back, so as to obtain more or less relief. The amount of relief depends upon the amount of beating, for it is possible to hammer up copper into considerable relief—from half-an-inch to an inch from the flat



No. 26.—Original Design for Tray or Plaque, suggested by *Lilium Speciosum*. The foliage in low relief, while the flowers are intended to be beaten up. The leaves might be merely outlined, and the basket-work background punched on.

is possible, but there is always the danger of breaking through the metal when you beat it up to this extent. The design can swell out and retire (one might liken it to the ebb and flow of the sea), find itself and lose itself, and by thus judiciously beating up the metal we give it variety and accent. We must exercise selection in settling what part

of our scheme we beat up in high relief, for the effect of a completed work largely depends upon the way we leave some portions in very low relief, while we bring out others, and to one or two features in our design we give considerable prominence by beating up into still higher relief. In



No. 27.—Original Design for Tray. The foliage to be in very low relief, while the frog, chameleon and insects can be in higher relief.

No. 26, for instance, the leaves should be only just beaten up, and where one leaf comes behind another it need only be outlined, or at all events kept lower than those in front. The petals of the flowers nearest the centre might be in fuller relief, while the stamens are only punched in on the front.

The animal forms in No. 27 need be the only ones in anything like relief.



No. 28.—Embossed Copper Panel, the work of the Yattendon Class.

In the copper panel No. 28 the relief is pretty much the same all over, and such a design would be a very suitable one for a beginner to beat up, a flat panel being much more easily manipulated than a pot or cup such as No. 29, which is a very good instance of a repeating geometrical design being employed in the decoration of a round surface.

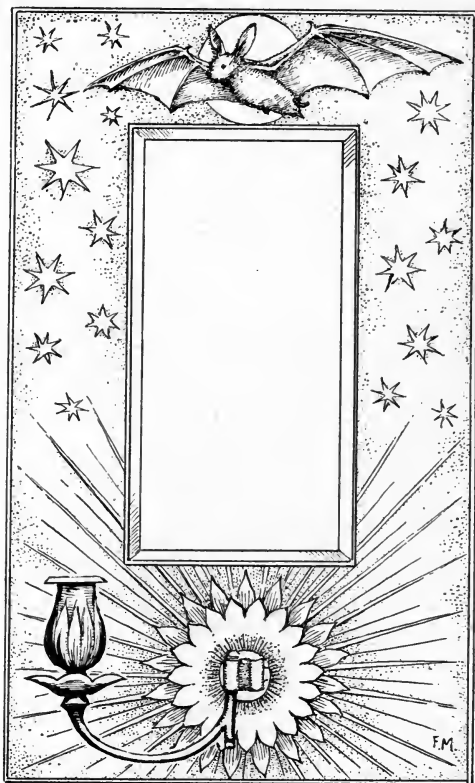
The other example of work wrought by the Yattendon class, which has made a speciality of copper repoussé, No. 3, chap. I., is suggestive in treatment. Here we have a certain barbaric rudeness which, if not overdone, is very effective.

We must avoid covering the whole surface with work of the same character. Do not be afraid of "spaces to let." All work depends for its effect upon relief; a plain space should follow a busy one, one in low relief a portion in high relief. Then the surface itself,



No. 29.—Embossed Copper Mug, the work of the Yattendon Class.

produced by hammering, should be valued. If we examine a piece of nicely wrought metal we find that the hammer



No. 30.—Original Design for Hanging Candle-holder with either a mirror or plain metal in centre. The stars and rays in very low relief, while the sunflower and bat should be in higher relief.

marks produce a series of facets which alone gives the metal a "preciousness," and in silver such a surface is far more



beautiful than highly polished plate. Yet this surface, frosted in appearance, which we obtain by beating silver,



No. 31.—Original Design for Candle-holder with mirror or plain metal in centre. The stars and leaves in low relief, while the flowers and owl in higher relief.

is only just beginning to be valued, so used have we become to the highly polished plate of commerce.

The best metal to beat is copper, as it is very tough and

elastic. Brass is harder, and therefore more brittle. Silver is pleasanter than brass to work in, but more brittle than copper. Steel is used, and Mr. Fisher worked a *châtelaine* belt in it which is given elsewhere. Pewter was frequently used by the seventeenth and eighteenth century craftsmen, and Mr. Ashbee has used pewter very effectively for electro-



No. 32.—Mirror Frame in Repoussé Copper. The design is beaten *in*, the reverse of the majority of examples given. (Fivemiletown, Co. Tyrone.)

liers. It is softer than copper, and can be beaten easily. Old pewter plates beat up very well, and as they are to be picked up reasonably they should be tried. I have seen some wrought by Mr. Gilbert Marks which were very effective. No. 46 is a good example of beaten pewter.

There is a method of eating away a portion of the copper

with nitric acid and either leaving the parts not acidied, or beating them up slightly so as to give them further relief. The edges of the design left in relief by the acid should be punched round, so as to mark it through at the back, and this alone gives further relief to the pattern. You might transfer your design to the metal and then paint over with Brunswick black the portions *not* to be eaten away. When this is quite hard, pour the acid upon it. If it were a tray, then you have only to cover the sides with black and pour in the acid. If it be a flat surface, then you must make a parapet of wax, to keep in the acid. Pure nitric acid works quickly and you had better perform the operation out of doors, as the fumes are very objectionable. You must also see that you have well covered your copper with the Brunswick black, as the acid will eat its way through any pinhole that may be left, and this the acid will soon enlarge. If you find the acid attacking any part you do not wish acidied, pour it off into the bottle, wash well with warm water, and when dry touch in the places with black. In cold weather the action of the acid is quickened by warming the metal. As for the length of time the acid must remain on, nothing very



No. 33.—Heraldic Beast.

definite can be said. When the acid is new it works quicker than if it had been used before. From a-quarter to half-



No. 34.—Heraldic Dragon, suggested by the Sixteenth-century Renaissance, in which the blending of animal or human form with ornament is often met with.

an-hour would produce a very decided result. The surface given by the acid is a broken one, but not unpleasant.

Nos. 26 and 27 might be largely wrought by aciding away the backgrounds. In the second design the whole of the background could be removed to a certain depth by the acid, and then the surface covered with stopping-out varnish—such as is sold by Mr. Rhind for etchers—and the spider-web marked out

on this ground with a sharp instrument and further acidied.

The frog, chameleon, and insects could then be beaten up

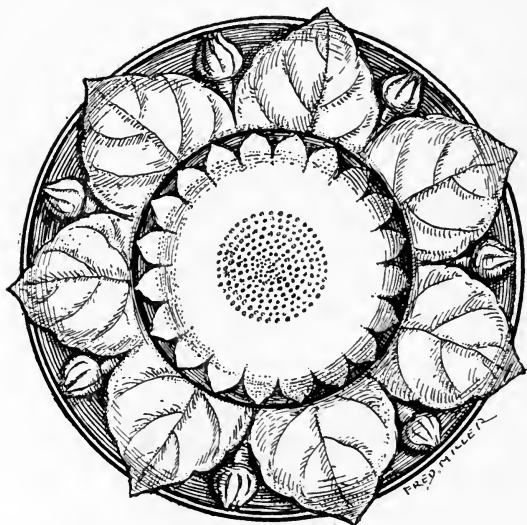
and wrought in repoussé, as could the foliage, though I should say it would do merely to hammer an outline round the edges, leaving the foliage just in the relief obtained by the acid; but these and other considerations must be thought out by the worker for himself.

In No. 26 either the basket-work background could be eaten in, and then the design beaten up — particularly the flowers at the corners — or the whole of the background could be eaten away and then the work covered with stopping-out varnish, the basket-work scratched away on this and bitten in.

No. 35.—Original Design for a Panel for Side of Fire-place or other purpose, treated with a decorative rendering of sea-weed, sea-horses, fish and shell. The wavy lines in background can be punched in, bitten in with acid, or omitted.



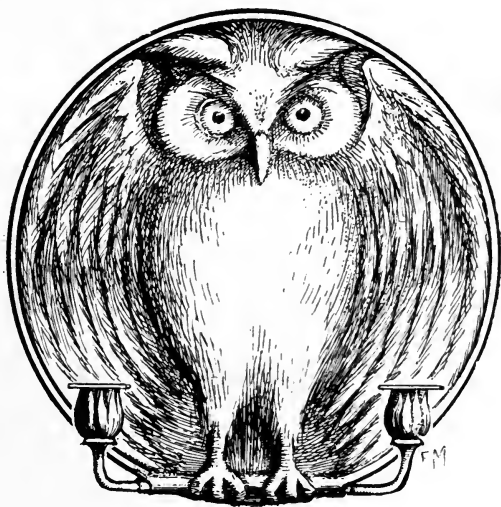
The acid has a tendency to eat its way into the edges of the design, so it is as well to paint your black a little beyond the edges of the pattern to allow for this. Etching on metal might be developed by an ingenious amateur. You could cover your metal with a soft wax ground similar to that used by etchers, and then by scratching this away with a



No. 36.—Original Design for Repoussé Dish suggested by the Sunflower. If desired, the leaves, which come outside the circle, can be modified so as to come within the circumference. The flower forms the hollow of the dish, the centre having holes punched in from the front.

fine bradawl or other tool, and applying acid, you can eat in the lines so scratched away. Afterwards you can beat up some portions from the back. The tool you use to scratch away the ground should not be too fine, as your lines want to be coarse enough to tell at a distance.

Artistic results are obtainable by very simple means and the very restraint exercised in good work gives it its charm. It is much harder to restrain oneself than let oneself go, and the tyro should always be on his guard that his love of beating up the metal does not run away with him. I saw a copper tray at an exhibition in which the design, consisting



No. 37.—Original Design for either a Dish or Wall Sconce to hold two candles. The dish is intended to be concave, and a quaint rendering of the eared owl wrought into it.

of a decorative treatment of foliage, was kept just in very low relief and flat in character, while the background was punched over with basket-work in the style of No. 26. Flat work of this nature, suitable for trays, doorplates, &c., should engage the beginner's attention before going on to dishes, and other articles which require much beating, for

it is obvious that the further removed our work is from the flat metal the greater the skill and knowledge required to treat it successfully.

Sconces or candle-holders are capital articles to engage



No. 38.—Rose-Water Dish in Repoussé Copper. Chiswick School of Arts and Crafts.

the tyro's attention when he has mastered the rudiments of the craft. I give in Nos. 30 and 31 suggestions for two candle-holders for hanging on the walls. In both cases the centres could either be flat metal or mirrors. The stars and



rays in No. 30 are to be in very low relief. The bat might be beaten up a little further, while the sunflower could be in fuller relief, and in the centre the sockets to hold the candle-



No. 39.—Design for Dish, treated with a decorative arrangement of the Opium Poppy. The edge is shown pierced, but if desired it can be wrought with a plain edge so as to avoid the cutting out of the edges.

sticks must be brazed on. The candle-holders themselves could be beaten out by those skilful enough to undertake such work, or you could get them cast for you by a brass worker. No. 31 presents no special difficulty. The leaves

should be in lower relief than the flowers, while the stars should be no more than just seen. The owl in the moon at the top could be beaten up further, so as to make it a distinctive feature in the sconce. The outside edges of these candle-holders should be beaten into rounded rims, as it would give a work a very papery and thin appearance to end with just the edge of the flat metal.

The two mirror frames from Ireland, No. 1, chap. 1, and No. 32, are articles that might be undertaken after a little practice, though the amateur cannot expect to get the finish and character of the work of this very successful village class. No. 32 is beaten *in* instead of out, and to my thinking is far less effective than work in relief, such as No. 1, the design of which pleasantly occupies the space, is well balanced, and possesses a decorative fitness which is far to be preferred to mere naturalness.

Quaint renderings of animals look very effective in repoussé, and the reader will gather from the designs accompanying these notes that I have a *penchant* for the quaint and grotesque. A touch of the savage or barbaric certainly seems to me to suit repoussé. The heraldic treatment of animal forms, as instanced in Nos. 33 and 34, can be most effectively rendered in beaten metal.

A fireplace I saw in a house was decorated with a number of copper panels, about six inches square, put together like tiles to cover the lower part of the chimney breast. Some of these squares had quaint animals wrought on them, while others were plain hammered metal, and a very striking feature in the room was this hammered copper. No. 34 was suggested by sixteenth-century Renaissance, the blending of animal forms with ornament being a very

noticeable feature of such work. The reader can obtain many suggestions from old work which he can adapt to his special requirements.

I confess I am more at home on such a design as No. 35, in which nature is only simplified and arranged to suit the



No. 40.—Design for Repoussé Bowl, with a decorative rendering of the Ragged Tulip. The frog and snail are introduced to give variety to the design. The base to have a border of butterflies ornamentally treated.

space to be covered. This class of design would appear to me to be more within the scope of the amateur, as the material can be found in museums and books on natural history and botany, while considerable scope is left for the individual to express himself. On the other hand, the work

known as "Renaissance" does not leave one much liberty of action. It is a mine that has been very thoroughly worked in the past, and, for myself, I feel so trammelled and bounded by precedent that my volition almost deserts me. It is like attempting to breathe the air of a hot orchid



No. 41.—Bowl in beaten Silver with naturalesque design of Daffodils,  
by Mr. Gilbert Marks.

house; I prefer the more bracing air outside. This constant working upon past models, without reference to nature, ends in such art as we contemptuously term "early Victorian." This inspiration by precedent seems to lead to utter stagnation; then is the time to go to the well-

spring of all art, Nature, for refreshment. Coming back to the design No. 35, it will be seen that the forms used are very familiar ones, the sea-horse (an animal made for the ornamentalist), the gurnard, a fish which nature has ornamentalised for one, and the seaweed with hollow vessels to keep the weed afloat. Such a plant is obviously adapted to the needs of the craft, and to make it growing out of a shell is a perfectly natural conceit, as well as giving another object of interest to the panel. It is hardly necessary to say that the seaweed should be kept in very low relief—barely seen in those parts where it comes against a more prominent form. The wavy lines in the background can be punched on, acidied in, or, if thought *de trop*, they can be left out.

Coming to dishes, we have a simple treatment in No. 36, suggested by our old friend of decorative art, the sunflower. To give a little variety I have carried the leaves beyond the outer rim, which would, of course, necessitate the cutting away of pieces all round. If that is considered inexpedient, the leaves can easily be brought within the circumference of the circle. The centre part of the dish constitutes the flower, the petals of which are intended to be wrought around the sides. The centre of the dish could have a number of small dots punched into the copper with a steel punch. Punches of various designs are often used in metal work, especially in backgrounds. I believe some purists object to their use; but I am no purist in this sense, and to trammel oneself needlessly is the way to court defeat. I can quite think, however, that such punches can be misused. They were frequently employed by the workers of the past, if that be any warranty for using them now. The

other dish, No. 37, I have adapted for the purpose of a sconce. The whole dish is intended to be concave, and the designs just brought out, giving the head of the owl chief prominence. There is no reason why this should not be made into a dish by leaving out the candle-supports.

In No. 38 we have an excellent example of the work of the Chiswick craftsmen. The design is pleasantly simple, a



No. 42.—Plate and Goblet in beaten Silver, exhibited at the Paris Exhibition by Jules Brateau.

decorative treatment of leaves, and were it merely drawn on paper would seem of small worth, but the beating up of the rim and the centre, as well as the ornament itself, makes the dish a valued possession. It is hardly necessary to say that the beating up of the rim and centre must precede the working of the ornament.

The dish, No. 39, and the bowl, No. 40, were suggested by the work of Mr. Gilbert Marks, whose beaten silver has recently given him a deservedly high place in this craft. An example of his work is to be seen in No. 41. The poppy is a very favourite form with designers, for both leaf and flower are beautiful, and full of decorative suggestions and possibilities. The amount of ornamentising that has been done is to arrange the flowers and leaves alternately and in a wave-like line, and to simplify both, omitting what is merely accidental and retaining what is characteristic. Such designs as these should be drawn in free-hand, so that though a general symmetry and balance is preserved, no two forms are quite alike. Repetition is quite allowable where the form repeated is highly ornamental, as the pomegranate, No. 1, or the scroll in the jug, No. 29, for in these cases it gives character to the work, but in a freer treatment such as the dish, No. 39, the repetition of any one form is to be avoided. I have ventured to cut out the edges of the dish, following the forms. It would be more trouble than having the dish circular, but I fancy the effect would be rich—at least, I see no objection to such a treatment, on paper. If the edges were cut as suggested in the design, it would be well to hammer the edges so as to curve over, and thus avoid the sharp edge of the metal being seen.

In beating out a bowl from the flat considerable skill is necessary, quite apart from that required in beating out the pattern on it. At the County Council School in Regent Street a test of skill is to beat out what is known as a tomato-shaped bowl. Such a bowl as that in No. 40 would have to be wrought in two pieces, the bowl proper in one, and the foot or stand in another, and then brazed together.

The tulip (the ragged variety) is the plant used, and nature has only been modified, not departed from. Skill and ingenuity can be shown in a design by the way a leaf can be made to wrap around or go at the back of another, and so bind the whole design together, and give it unity, which is



[No. 43.—Original Design for Plaque, representing 'Night.'  
The boy carries aloft a torch of stars and is riding upon an owl.

strength in design as well as civil life. The foreshortening of forms can only be suggested, and a certain simplicity must be preserved so as to avoid crowding and confusion. Have a few well-defined forms and give prominence to parts



of the design, leaving others almost to lose themselves. The introduction of the frog and snail may be objected to by some. I am not sure that Mr. Gilbert Marks would



No. 44.—Original Design for Dish, with figure of Infant Neptune seated on a fish, with ornamental treatment of waves in background.

advocate their admission into the design ; still I have a feeling that the scheme is made more interesting as well as being helped by the introduction of animal forms, as they can be made a feature of in themselves as well as being a foil

to the plants. The border of butterflies on the base is better, it seems to me, than introducing a floral border, as we then confine our foliage to one particular part of the bowl. Such articles as large bowls and coalscuttles are very pleasant if merely beaten into shape. It would certainly be good practice to get a "prentice han'" in on such works as these. No. 42 is an example of modern French beaten silver, and was in the Paris Exhibition, 1900. It shows the present strong 'naturalistic' tendency in France, which is a wholesome recoil from the very stereotyped wit of the average French craftsmen.

The Dutch were fond of beating up figure compositions, and one often sees plaques treated with designs after Teniers and Ostade. I have made a couple of simple designs, Nos. 43 and 44, to show how figures may be treated when wrought in beaten metal. It is surely a very different business modelling figures to be cast in bronze, or carved in stone, to beating up a dish in which a figure is introduced into the scheme of decoration. A pictorial treatment seems to me wrong, and the beating up of metal after a picture by Teniers, and that on a circular dish, is not likely to lead to so effective or harmonious a result as where the figure is schemed out and made to take its place in the design. A fanciful idea, therefore, as the young Neptune on the back of a fish (No. 44), or the one of Night (No. 43), where the boy carries a torch of stars, appears to me more a decoration than a man smoking a pipe, or a woman feeding swans, for in the one case you are removed from the actual, and taken into the world of the imagination, where anything is possible, whereas if you go in for a realistic design, the limitations the craft imposes on you are chiefly felt.

Those who have only beaten copper will be charmed with silver as a metal to work in. The surface of beaten silver is, as I have said, most beautiful, and the same design wrought in silver will present a very different appearance to what it does in copper, the white metal giving a choiceness and refinement wanting in the coarser material.



No. 45.—Salt Cellar and Mustard Pot beaten in Silver at Essex House, from designs by Mr. Ashbee.

I am able to give examples of wrought silver in Nos. 41 and 45, but several other of the designs might have been beaten in silver.

Essex House produces some characteristic examples of wrought silver and the two examples in No. 45 are certainly

individual in design, and if we examine the details of the two articles we see that the *motifs* are remarkably



No. 46.—Clock wrought in Pewter by Jules Brateau. The base is a Poppy reversed, all the details being symbolical.

simple, the surface of the metal itself playing an important part in the effect. Mr. Gilbert Marks' bowl is conceived in

a different spirit, and the design is more naturalistic than ornamental. The narcissus lies pleasantly on the bowl and breaks up the surface without destroying its contour. Most



No. 47.—Cabinet in Wrought Iron. Messrs. T. Potter & Sons.

of the details it will be noticed are kept in very low relief, the flowers being the only forms accented by fuller relief.

The clock, No. 46, was also shown in the Paris Exhibition,

and was wrought in pewter, so that it is evident any class of effect can be beaten out of this metal.

Sheet silver can be purchased at a wholesale jeweller's or bullion dealer's at about 2s. 6d. an ounce.

Much could be done in the way of jewellery—the beating out of waist and shoe buckles, hair ornaments—especially if heightened by the addition of enamels, and in the chapter on enamelling I have directed the worker's attention to this branch of metal work.

A few amateurs have taken up wrought iron with success, and there is no great difficulty to be overcome in this craft. Those in the country or who are near a forge can always get a little help from a friendly smith, or a smith made friendly by judicious *pour boires*, and before setting up an anvil and small forge of one's own one could get one's hand in on the farrier's anvil.

There was a time when a village smith was an artist and shaped and bent his iron into delightful scrolls and curves, such as can still be seen on old sign-boards, locks and hinges, but now beyond a certain mechanical dexterity the artistic aspirations of the worker in iron appear to be atrophied. The laudable effort to restore village handicrafts by the Home Arts Association and other agencies will, one hopes, do something to bring back some of the tasteful hand-cunning that once was to be found in villages.

Those who have worked in wrought iron will be interested in the cabinet figured in No. 47, which is made entirely of wrought iron. It is admirably designed to show the peculiar beauty of bent iron—the delightful curves and scrolls that can be fashioned when the iron is heated so that it will bend readily.

## CHAPTER IV.

### CLAY MODELLING AND METAL WORK IN RELIEF.



MOST boys love to play with clay and putty, and model objects, if only coffins and skeletons, in these yielding materials. And boys of larger growth will find clay modelling a very fascinating occupation. When staying in a village some years ago where there was a tile and flower-pot pottery, I obtained some clay and modelled some articles, which I afterwards had burnt into terra cotta, and as many readers may be within reach of a kiln such as this, I will give them the results of my experience, as some of them may like to try their hand at this most interesting work.

The use of a potter's wheel is a matter requiring some practice, easy as it is to use by those who have had an apprenticeship to it. The difficulty is to keep the clay on the wheel while you "pull it up" and manipulate it into a vase or other vessel. But the amateur need not wait until he can "throw" a pot; for a few pence you can get a potter to do this, and your work can be to decorate it with

work in relief. Or you can start with a drain-pipe as it comes out of the press, and by pulling out the top—making it thinner and bending it over, and then put a bottom to it with feet, as shown in sketch No. 48, a very pleasant shape



No. 48.—Vase made of Drain Pipe. Ornamented in Relief with the Bramble.

is obtained. You can then decorate the surface with work in low relief. I found it a good plan to model leaves, etc., and then stick them on the vase, carefully wetting the clay to make them adhere. You can, in fact, roll out your clay thin, like dough, and take an actual leaf and shape the clay from it, or you can build up your design straight away, using your fingers to fashion it, for it is a good plan to thumb the

clay well, working in a free and somewhat rough manner. Those who have seen a sculptor make a clay sketch will have noticed how square and angular he works, and the amateur should bear this in mind, for it is all too easy to

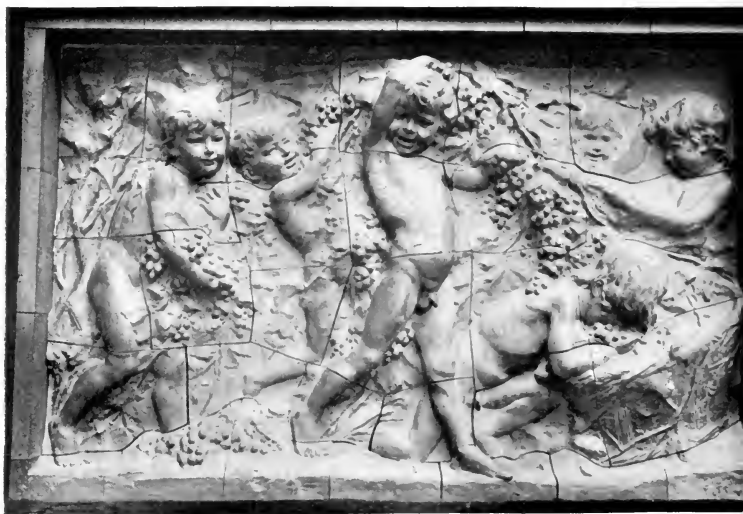


get smoothness and so-called finish in one's work ; the difficulty is to obtain crispness, vigour, "go." A few wooden modelling tools, and one steel one with a wire scraper (all these can be had of a good artists' colourman), are all the implements necessary, the fingers doing the rest. Throw up your chief objects, working freely, and try to avoid thinking of obtaining finish until the general lines of the design are fixed, and the chief masses built up. The disposition must be resisted of tickling up individual forms ; this can be done when the whole of your decorative scheme is mapped out on the vase. But don't be afraid of a certain roughness, for you will find when fired your crisp, angular work is much more effective than where everything is smoothed away like a wax doll. You can break up the surface of the vase by scratching it with the point of a tool or by dotting it, but whether this should be done or not can only be decided by reference to the particular work in hand. All one can say is, don't be too "busy"; aim at



No. 49.—Panel in Della Robbia Ware for Overmantel Insertion. Designed by Miss E. M. Rope.

simplicity rather than multiplicity, a few well placed forms being far more effective than a mass of detail bewildering in its complexity. Be careful to keep a wet cloth over the clay while the work is in progress, and even spray it over with water if the weather is hot before working, for if your clay once dries, all chance of thumbing it is over. On the



No. 50.—Stoneware Panel. *The Vintage*. Modelled by  
M. Roskam for Boch Frères, Brussels.

other hand, when it is dry, you can carve up any part of your work or tool it with a steel scraper, but my impression is that it is as well to avoid doing much in this way, but get your effect entirely by modelling in the plastic state.

Before your work can be fired, it must be thoroughly dried, and this had better be done at the pottery, for if there

be any moisture in the clay when it is put in the kiln, the chances are the work will split.

Flat tiles can be decorated with work in relief, or you could scratch on your design and then take out the background to a certain depth—if the tile is  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thick, then you could take out the background to a depth of  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch—as though you were “grounding out” in wood carving, and you can then model and tool up the design, adding clay in those parts where higher relief is required; but in the



No. 51.—Work in Relief. Piano Front in Silver.  
By Miss Esther Moore.

decoration of a vase with work in relief the design should appear to lie upon the surface securely, and not give the impression that it will drop off of its own weight. Work in too high relief spoils the contour of the vase by aggressively asserting itself.

As for the designs, the adaptation of any plant form will give you all the opportunity you require for showing taste and skill. Such a plant as the blackberry, used in Fig. 48, is full of decorative suggestiveness, but there are dozens of other familiar plants that would do equally well.

Animal life, as well as the human form, should be essayed by those who feel equal to it, and it is worth noting that many who make but a poor hand at drawing, find they get

on with modelling, the fact being that in the latter the forms grow under the hand, and proportion is thus more easily secured, because form is felt in modelling, while in drawing it is only seen.

Another way of decorating clay in the plastic state is to draw in the forms with a sharp point, which, of course, makes an incised line. This is effective, particularly where colour can be used too.

The panel No. 49 was modelled in clay, and afterwards coloured and glazed at the pottery known as Della Robbia, at Birkenhead. This pottery, like Mr. Conrad Dressler's near Marlow,



No. 52.—The Door of Spare Berth in Steerage. "The Volatile."  
Designed by G. C. Haité.

produces work in relief, covered with an opaque glaze in much the same way as the Italian work of the sixteenth

century, which is always associated with the name of Lucca della Robbia. A certain number of colours, blue, brown, yellow, green, and a dull pink, can be given to the work, but as it is fired to a great heat the palette is limited. But coloured, glazed pottery is almost without the reach of amateurs, for, unless they can get their works glazed and fired at a pottery, it is impossible for them to attempt work of this nature. No. 50 is an example of modelled pottery, and was in the Paris Exhibition.

Modelled terra cotta, on the other hand, can be fired

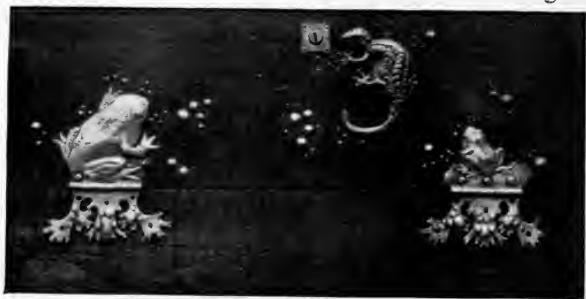


No. 53.—Butterfly Hinge on Door. "The Volatile."

without difficulty at a comparatively small cost, and with little risk of damage in the kiln.

Modelling for metal casting is usually done in wax, as this is a material that works easily. The mould, too, is quickly made by casting the model in sand and plaster, and melting out the wax. Many modellers make their sketch in wax, and then have this cast in plaster of Paris, which they then tool up with steel scrapers, getting an amount of finish not possible in any other way, for plaster admits of a high finish. Such a panel as that by Miss Esther Moore,

No. 51, is produced in this way, that being the artist's method of work. The relief here is subtle, and the lines of the design are so delicate that only very careful manipulation could produce the result we see. Miss Moore makes her finished sketch in clay, and this is then cast in plaster. Casting has come to be a special calling, largely in the hands of Italians, and it is advisable to get a professional caster to do any work of this nature. There are several men around Leather Lane who go round to studios to do casting.



No. 54.—Details of Cupboard Door at base of Spare Berth.  
“The Volatile.”

With regard to the casting in metal, this must be done at a foundry. Of course, silver can only be used for small work, as its cost would be too great. Bronze is the metal employed, though some castings have been made in aluminium.

Such designs as the hinges and ornament on door of yacht designed by Mr. Haité, No. 52, are more within the scope of amateurs, as Nature is of so much assistance in suggesting *motifs*. The animal forms are manifestly inspired

by Japanese lacquer work, and to that source I direct the tyro's attention, for a study of good Japanese art will teach the decorative artist much, as their genius lies entirely in the treating of surfaces with natural forms. There is no occasion to slavishly follow one's model, for in the hinges themselves Mr. Haité has introduced an original note, the suggestion of seaweed being very happy in such a situation as a yacht door. The details shown in Nos. 53 and 54 give one some idea of the modelling of the originals. After the work returns from the casters, it may be tooled up and



No. 55.—Portion of a Frieze. Designed by J. Moss.

worked with advantage. Files are used for this purpose, and if the surface is too smooth a certain texture is given it by filing. This, of course, must be done with knowledge and discretion, and you had better only file away any rough places or defects, and leave the casting alone, than tinker at it and so spoil it.

After all it is the *art* that one pays for in all fine work, and such articles as jewellery, table ornaments, etc., might well engage the amateur's attention, for even if he have his work cast in silver, at the present price, some 2s. 3d. per oz., it

would not be a ruinous outlay, while in bronze the cost of metal is trifling ; and to see any work that one has wrought entirely oneself gives a pang of pleasure that must be experienced to be realised. The mere fact that your work is made permanent in silver or bronze gives it a quality and value that you never dreamed it possessed in its wax or clay state.

The portion of a frieze shown in No. 55 is an admirable



No. 56.—Calendar, Louis XV. Design in Silver by Frank Lutiger.

example of a surface decorated in low relief. The work is concentrated, and the flat portion of the panel is rightly valued. The suggestion of water is very happily given, and the restraint of the whole design evinces much taste and knowledge. It points a moral to the tyro, the need of keeping oneself well in hand, and not being too boisterous in one's efforts ; but checking the impulse to cover every part of the surface with work, know how to confine it to certain places where it tells with due effect.



The calendar, No. 56, is in strong contrast to the rest of the illustrations to this chapter, and it is well that all styles should be represented in these pages, for though this so-called Renaissance work makes no strong appeal to me, I quite acknowledge that much skill is shown in designing such an example as that given. My chief objection is that one is so fettered by the arbitrary "style" adopted, that it is next to impossible for anyone's *ego* to find expression, and, as may be gathered from what I have said elsewhere, this is the greatest possible objection to working on such arbitrary lines.

## CHAPTER V.

### ENAMELLING AND ENAMELLED JEWELLERY.



HERE has been a great revival in the art of enamelling this last few years, and it is one of the crafts taught in the technical classes established by the London County Council. Mr. Alexander Fisher, examples of whose work are given in this chapter, is one of the teachers, and it is to him that I am indebted for much of the information here given concerning this most beautiful craft. It is by no means beyond the reach of amateurs, and some very delightful effects can be obtained with a comparatively small equipment, as the enamels can be applied to beaten metal work to give variety and colour to it. Of course, when it comes to carrying out a figure design in which there is a great play of colour, then one enters upon difficulties which can only be overcome by the skill that comes of practice.

The equipment for enamelling is a fire-clay muffle or kiln heated either by gas or charcoal, the enamels themselves, which are usually sold in lumps resembling coloured glass, and some pieces of copper, unless, as I have said, you enamel the work you have repousséd.

The enamels have to be pounded up in a mortar and then ground on a slab of glass with a muller, but even then they will be gritty and somewhat difficult to manipulate. They must be mixed with water, and just a soupçon of sugar might be added as one did with china colours to enable them to be worked more easily, and also to cause them to adhere to the surface of the metal, but very little sugar must be used, for if the enamels remain sticky-looking when dry, they will crack and bubble in the kiln and be spoilt.

One of the simplest uses of enamels is to take a disc of metal about the size of a large button, and float on a coat of colour, using a long, camel-hair brush for the purpose. You must get plenty of enamel on the metal, and therefore a long-haired brush will hold more colour than a short one. The enamel must drop, as it were, on to the metal, and while wet it can be manipulated, but until the



No. 57.—Spoon in Silver and Enamel. Designed by Miss B. Martin.

tyro has felt his way, it is better to remain content with just covering the metal with the ground colour. Both sides of the metal must be enamelled (though on the back only a thin coat need be given), if the metal is flat, as in the kiln it will become slightly convex owing to the "pull" of the enamels on the metal, and the enamel on the back helps to pull



No. 58.—Jewel Casket in Wrought Steel and Champlévé Enamel.  
Designed by Alex. Fisher.

against that on the front. You might float on rings various coloured enamels, something like an archery target on a miniature scale, both to practise in manipulating the colours, and also to see how they fire, for some enamels require a little more heat than others.

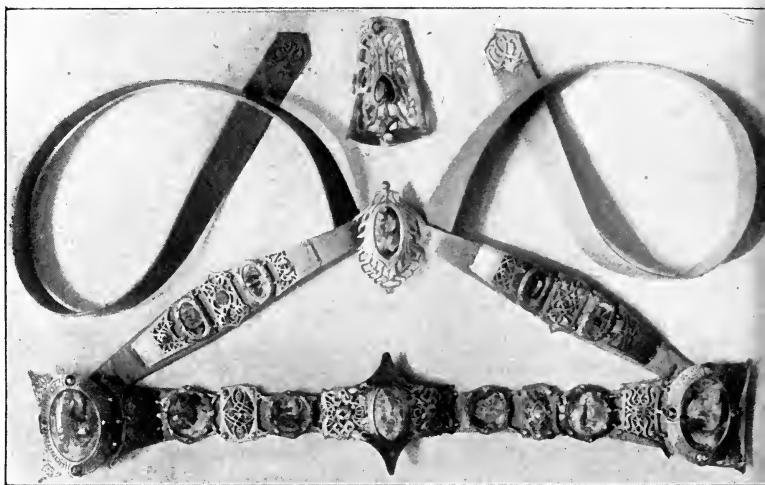
The muffles are of various sizes, but it would be

advisable for a beginner to have quite a small one at first, as only small articles should be attempted. There is an opening in front, which is closed with a fire-brick door, through which you place your work, and the heat is soon obtained sufficient to melt the enamel on the metal, but here one of the first difficulties presents itself; to get just the right amount of heat. Practice soon tells one when the right heat is reached, but the work can be withdrawn with a pair of long pincers, and the enamel looked at to see if it has melted, and it can be put back and fired again if necessary. The work should be left to cool in the muffle, as by cooling it too quickly the enamel is apt to crack, and even flake off. Too much heat will cause the enamels to cinder and spoil, and this must be most carefully guarded against: under-firing can be easily remedied, but the opposite fault is fatal.

Colour, without much design, applied to metal, if it be nice colour, produces a very pleasant effect, and a necklace or other form of chain ornament, composed of small discs of silver enamelled and linked together, is very decorative in effect. In my former book, *The Training of a Craftsman*, in the chapters on Enamelling and Jewellery some simple effects are shown which might well engage the beginner's attention. The necklace on page 80, for instance, composed of small quatrefoils of beaten silver, about the size of a yellow buttercup, would look very rich if each one were enamelled, perhaps a different colour, the pearl being replaced by a blob of enamel. The silver jewel by Mr. Frampton on page 86, composed of a disc of silver about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter, with a name in a light enamel on a dark ground, to which are attached small plain discs, about  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch in

diameter, enamelled in various colours, made an unique and beautiful personal ornament, and was simplicity itself.

The same enamel on copper, silver, and gold, will have a different effect on each metal, owing to the colour of the metal showing through the enamels, and in elaborate schemes, such as those of Mr. Fisher's, which are on copper, small pieces of silver and gold foil are placed under certain



No. 59.—Girdle in Repoussé Steel and Enamels.  
Designed by Alex. Fisher.

very transparent enamels to produce a gem-like effect. In the necklace above referred to the pearl in the original might be replaced by a small disc of silver if the quatrefoils are copper, or of gold if of silver. The enamel binds these pieces of added metal to the parent.

Those who have painted china or pottery know that some colours do not assume their proper tint until fired, and this

is the case with enamels, a dull yellow brown, for instance, firing a lovely turquoise. The beginner should not burden himself with many enamels, for much may be done with some six or eight colours. One enamel can be painted over another, and the tyro should certainly let his first efforts be of the nature of experiments, learning his way about, as it were.

Enamels, like water colours, may be classed as those which are opaque, those which are semi-opaque, and the transparent or translucent ones. In painting a head, for instance, opaque enamels must be used in the flesh, but another class of effects can be obtained by using an opaque enamel over a dark, transparent one, allowing some of the ground colour to show through. It is the successful interplay of the three classes of enamels that yields those fine effects which we marvel at in old and some modern work. Enamelling is essentially a colour art, and everything should be done to bring out this quality, in which it stands unrivalled. The effect of veneers of gems is to be obtained, and the worker in enamels should think of colour before form, though the perfect work is the result of a union of the two. The beginner, I hold, should not think too much about form, for while he is occupied in scheming out his design, and attending to the delineation, he is apt to neglect his palette, and, as I have endeavoured to show, many charming effects can be obtained with enamels without any very elaborate designing.

In speaking of enamels one always thinks of those works of the sixteenth century, wrought at Limoges by the families of Penicaud, Courtois, Limousin, and others. Like all traditional arts, there is a certain likeness in all the works of the period, and if we examine the examples in

any fine collection, such as the Waddesdon bequest at the British Museum, we find that a dark, semi-opaque blue



No. 60.—“ Olivia.” Enamelled Plaque in Translucent Enamel.  
Designed by Alex. Fisher.

ground covers the copper, while translucent and opaque enamels play into this. The sixteenth century craftsmen



were very skilful in using an opaque enamel so that the modelling was given by the ground colour showing through the white. When we consider the size of the dishes, plaques, ewers, and other articles successfully fired by these Limoges craftsmen, knowing the risks run wherever work has to go through the ordeal by fire, it increases our admiration of their productions, though the designs they



No. 61.—Eldorado, set with jewels, in Translucent Enamels and Steel Settings. Designed by Alex. Fisher.

carried out may not be quite to our taste. Anyone who has tried enamelling knows that in these sixteenth century works the enamellers thoroughly gauged the capabilities of their craft, and used it to secure the best results. They made no attempt to produce the effect of an oil painting or a miniature, but worked to display the peculiar resources

and individualities of their craft, which is just what we should do and what we can do without in any way imitating these old Limoges enamels. It is to that end that I direct the reader's attention to the importance of keeping before one that enamelling is a colour art, and that certain qualities of colour (as though we overlaid metals with gems), as well as the colours themselves, are the prerogatives of this craft, and this craft alone.

The tyro might take such forms as a butterfly, beetle, bird, or peacock's feather, and carry out the colour scheme suggested by these objects. Treat them ornamentally, *not* naturally, and chiefly for their colour. Look upon them as rich and varied palettes, shaped after one of these natural forms, for what could be more brilliant than a kingfisher or a red admiral butterfly? And in rendering them in enamels we bring all the resources of our craft into play.

The enamelling of the handle of a spoon, No. 57, would be a simple work to essay, for here the design is given by the metal, and the only thing to think about is the colours to use and the putting of them on. The ornamental portions of the casket, No. 58, would also be simple to enamel, as here again the metal work gives the design. In *champlevé* enamels spaces are cut out in a thick plate of metal, and these spaces filled in with powdered enamel, which is then fired, and afterwards filed down even with the metal and then polished.

If we roughen the surface of the metal, indent a pattern in it, chase or repoussé it, and then cover it with translucent colour, the work we have done on the metal will materially affect the enamels, and enamels used in this way may be looked upon as handmaids to metal work.

Much of the fine jewellery of the sixteenth century, unique specimens of which are in the Waddesdon room, are touched up with enamels, that is, they are employed to



No. 62.—Triptych, in Enamel and Bronze. Designed by Alex. Fisher.

heighten the effect by adding colour to form. The tyro, in taking up such a craft as this, should make a careful study of fine old work, not with an idea of doing anything like

it, but to catch the spirit of the work of the masters. The girdle, No. 59, could have the circular spaces ena-



*By permission of the Hon. Mrs. Percy Wyndham.*

No. 63.—Portrait of Lady Elcho in Translucent Enamels.  
Designed by Alex. Fisher.

melled in some simple design, while the pierced and beaten ornamental portions could also be enamelled.

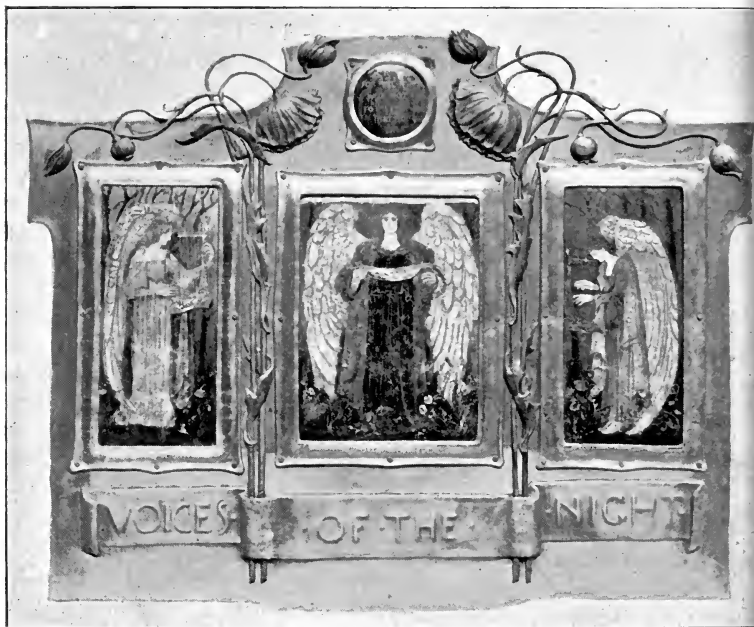
A skilled worker makes some of his own colours, but a very varied assortment of enamels, chiefly of French make, can be purchased, so the tyro had better confine himself to learning what to do with them rather than waste his time in chemical experiments.

Gold is often used in enamelling—in old Limoges work it is employed as an outline on the dark ground, and so used is rich and effective. Gold is put in in the form of a dull yellow powder, similar to gold used in china painting, and must be applied in the *last* firing, as it requires burnishing when fired. An elaborate effect is fired sometimes ten or eleven times, the harder enamels being fired on first and those requiring less heat, afterwards. The opaque enamels can be finished with ordinary china colours, and in a portrait this is often resorted to, but in the Limoges portrait enamels, like that of Catherine of Lorraine, No. 24, in the Waddesdon Collection, no attempt is made to get the effect of a portrait in oils, but a quite simple scheme of colour, with a flat treatment, in which there is no striving after elaborate modelling, characterises the flesh. The drapery and jewels are richly coloured, jewellery being particularly well rendered by enamels. The white of the enamel used for flesh is slightly tinted with pink, which can be done with china colours, but the worker should not seek to get the effect of china painting, but go for a simpler and more characteristic treatment.

The old Battersea enamels were worked on copper, the metal being covered thickly with a milky opaque enamel. Upon this the design was painted as it would have been on china, and with the same colours. Translucent enamels were sometimes used in addition, but these Battersea snuff-

boxes and bijouterie have none of the splendour of Limoges work : they are too much like painted china to be successful as enamels.

In figure work the mistake many painters make is



No. 64.—“ The Voices of the Night,” in Translucent Enamels.  
Designed by Alex. Fisher.

attempting to be too realistic. In the head of Olivia, No. 60, the flesh was kept very simple, the features and contour being slightly outlined. The hair was treated as a mass, and a few gold threads were introduced. The dress was very brilliant, looking like black velvet and silver.

Portraits were very successfully painted by the Limoges craftsmen, and there is a great charm about them in their severity. In No. 63, the head by being kept en profile is certainly more easily worked in enamels, and the flat treatment, with no attempt to get depth of colour or *chiaro oscuro*, is quite the right treatment.

Mr. Alex. Fisher is a very skilful worker in metal, and the tyro might well confine his enamelling to the frames themselves, leaving the spaces filled with subjects to be occupied by photographs or paintings, for badly drawn and poorly executed figure compositions are works no one wishes to possess, and only those who have the knowledge, as well as much skill, should essay them; whereas many who work in metal could employ enamels with considerable effect, to give variety to their repoussé work.

Such examples as No. 64 and the Triptych, No 62, call into play all the resources of the enameller's craft, and for ecclesiastical purposes what can be more appropriate than works in enamel, seeing that they are not only brilliantly decorative, but permanent, as only work that is fired can be. Those workers who feel capable of trying their hand at a figure composition might, instead of seeking to produce original designs, interpret some of the old masters in the National Gallery that lend themselves to the treatment, such as Botticelli's Madonna.

## CHAPTER VI.

### BOOKBINDING AND LEATHER WORK.



HO would have thought a few years ago that bookbinding could be successfully followed by amateurs, and yet most excellent work is executed, even in villages, under the auspices of the Home Arts Association, examples of which we see in Nos. 4, 67, and 76, while such guilds as that of the Women Binders and Chiswick School of Art, an example of whose work may be seen in No. 65, turn out work that is both original and craftsmanlike. The tooling on the cover of *Thro' the Looking Glass* is very ingeniously contrived, besides being symbolical of the contents of the book. Not that this can always or often be done in such an emphatic manner as shown in this example, and purists I doubt not would object to such a direct reference to the book itself in the ornamentation of the covers, but an original note is after all what we are all waiting to hear.

The ornamentation of leather may be divided into

1. Gold Tooling and work done with small stamps.
2. Inlaying.
3. Incising and embossing.

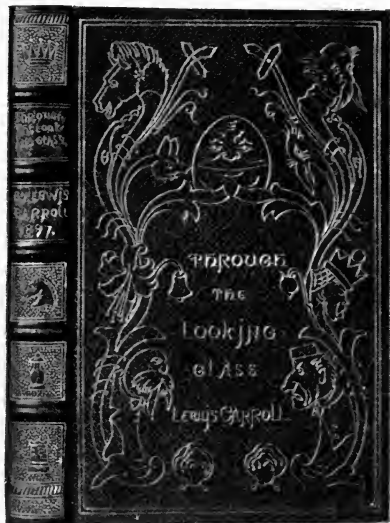


Of course the three may be combined in one cover, though as a rule only the two first are united. Poker work on leather is touched upon in Chapter XIII.

The colouring or painting of leather cannot be said to be a development of the craft, but rather an addition to it, and it is a doubtful expedient adding paint to a book cover.

However, as we shall touch upon painted leathers in this chapter, we will leave further consideration until then.

No. 65 is an example of pure tooling, where the lines forming the design are pressed into the leather with heated tools and afterwards gilded (though they may be left plain or "blind" as it is termed). The tooling in this example is carried very far, for it is made to render



No. 65.—Example of Tooling, by Chiswick School of Arts and Crafts. The suggestion of grotesque heads is very skilfully managed.

grotesque heads, and to accomplish this the craftsman must be very expert, as there is no altering wrong lines or retrieving mistakes, for a line once pressed into leather has to remain. The binder's skill is best shown in tooling, for with comparatively simple means the most beautiful effects

can be obtained, as a line or curve tooled on leather is in itself a beautiful thing.



No. 66.—Inlaid Book Cover, designed by F. A. Hallin.

To help out the tooling, small stamps cut in the shape of

leaves, stars, flowers, and other simple forms are used. By combining these in various ways considerable variety of effects can be wrought.

As an example of elaborate inlaying No. 66 is a most admirable instance, and shows what can be done by a skilled craftsman. It was shown in the recent Paris Exhibition. In

this example we have the tree and deer in dark morocco, while the rest of the cover is in a light colour. The leaves are tooled, not stamped. This example is a *tour de force*, for the difficulties in rendering the swans and water with its reflections are very considerable, as they are



No. 67.—Repoussé Leather, by the Kirby Lonsdale Class, under Messrs. Harris.

executed with much skill. Whether binding should go so far in a pictorial direction I will not decide. The less ambitious, more restrained work, is certainly more satisfying to many of us.

An example of repoussé work on leather is seen in No. 67. The design is beaten out from the back, being first tooled on the front to give the outline which is to be

followed in the embossing. Very excellent effects are to be obtained in this way, and it does not present the difficulties that gold tooling does, as the tooling in No. 67 is blind. I shall deal with this work and developments of it subsequently.

We have a combination of tooling and embossing in



No. 68.—Bookbinding, designed and executed by Miss J. Birkenruth.  
An example of tooling stamping with figure panel in repoussé.

No. 68, by Miss Birkenruth, who is always original in her bindings, and the resources of her craft are well shown in this example. The fish, by being left plain on a punched or powdered ground, have almost the

effect of being inlaid. This dotting of leather adds, as it were, another colour to the binding, for it seems to veil the leather and give it a bloom. "Punches of various designs are employed to produce these backgrounds, and when rightly used are very helpful.

The combination of colour to embossing may be seen in No. 69. The Spanish carried the treatment of embossed and painted leather as far as it ever has been taken in their wall coverings, and it will be better to consider the subject when treating of this class of work.

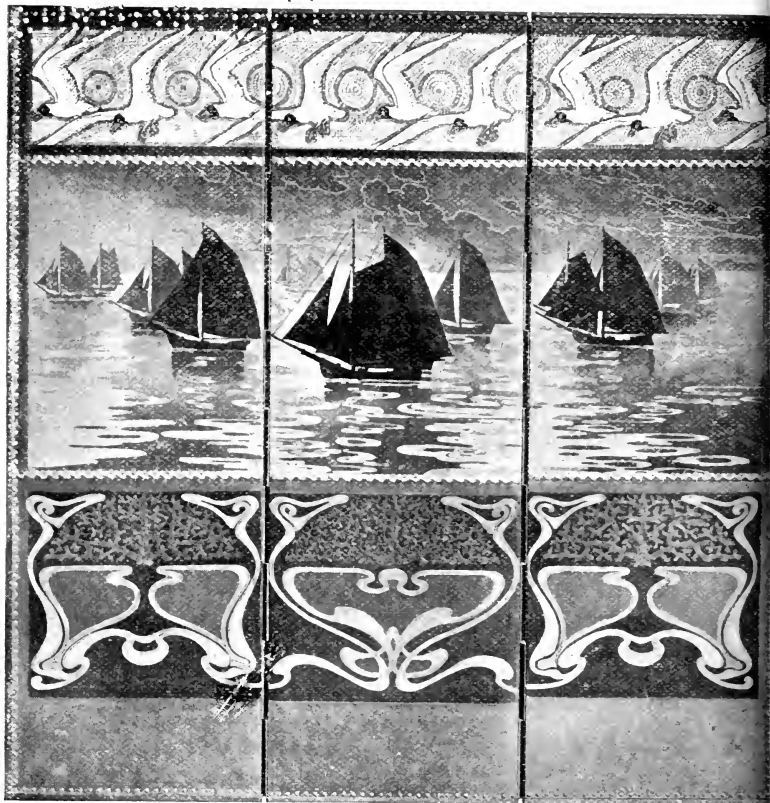
Mr. and Miss MacColl have introduced a new technique into tooling by using a wheel to produce not only straight lines but curves and forms usually produced by stamps. The method, with some examples, will be found fully described in *The Training of a Craftsman*.

We will now deal in detail with a certain class of work that might first occupy an amateur's attention and then touch upon the matter of making designs for leather work.

Much attention has been given to leather embossing within the last few years, and as the effects obtainable are admirable, and the work is more within the scope of amateurs than "tooling," we will first consider its possibilities, and very briefly its technique, which I take from an article contributed by Mr. H. Jacobsen, an eminent worker in this way.

The design to be wrought must be made full size, and a tracing taken on stout tracing paper, which is then laid over the leather, well damped beforehand with a sponge. With a hard point the design is now gone over, thus leaving an impress upon the leather. For

cutting the outlines, the leather is put on a board of hard wood—or better, a stone slab or sheet of thick



No. 69.—Painted, embossed, and lacquered Leather Screen by Mr. George Hulbe, of Frankfort. Exhibited at the Paris Exhibition.

plate-glass. A small sharp knife is used, held like a penholder, the sharp edge in front, and it is advisable

to start the cutting at the commencement of the design. With light pressure, the knife is led along the outlines, pushing it forward and at the same time supporting it with the forefinger of the left hand. Straight lines are better cut with the help of a ruler. The leather, whether thick or thin, must be cut exactly *half through*; for if cut too deeply, the material is weakened, and if too lightly, the ornament is apt to be indistinct. The greatest care must be taken over this part of the process, as the after success largely depends upon this preliminary work. The cutting finished, the space between the ornaments must be pressed down. This is done as follows:—First, slightly wet the leather with a sponge dipped in clean cold water; then take the “modelling” tool, and with the point go over the incised lines, laying them open. This done, use the broad end of the same tool, and press the space between the ornaments down, so that the latter come into bold relief. This process requires to be done with some force, and it must likewise be executed carefully and evenly, so as to bring the ornament well out. By continually wetting the surface the work is made easier.

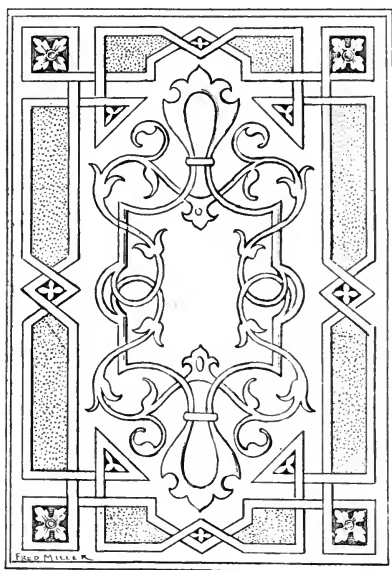
In order to make the modelling process more interesting and the work more artistic, the leather is cut underneath that part of the ornament which it is desirable to raise. For this part of the work, take the undercutting knife in the right hand, and cut in a nearly vertical position underneath the ornament, whereby the leather will be split according to the size of the design.

To obtain relief, the leather must be punched up from the back, being first wetted; and the amount of relief

depends upon the force which is used. But to preserve these hollowings, they must be filled up at the back with modelling wax. This must be pressed home with dry hands, as the presence of any moisture will prevent the

adhesion of the wax to the leather. The wax must only just fill the hollows, for if it project beyond the plane of the leather, it will make it uneven when the leather is laid down upon the millboard or other surface it is to cover.

Punching the surface of the leather will give a different texture, and also give prominence to the ornament. "Star" and "ring" punches are used of various sizes, according to the dimensions of the



No. 70.—Panelled Design, modelled on sixteenth-century work; to be incised and embossed. The dotted spaces represent punched surfaces.

work to be wrought, and by keeping the leather moist and giving each punch a sharp blow with a hammer, it is permanently indented.

By working the leather from the back and punching down the surface, quite sufficient relief will be obtained for chair-



backs, or seats, where it would be inadvisable to use wax. It is only in book covers, box covers, and suchlike articles, that higher relief should be attempted, and then the use of wax is indispensable. Designs Nos. 70, 71 and 72 are all suitable for this treatment.

The process reads simple enough, and it is one in which a sufficient technique is soon acquired, so that the amateur is enabled to produce very creditable work in a short time. Leather is indeed a pleasant material to work, as it is very responsive to the touch, so that a work does not have to be in hand long enough for all interest in it to vanish. On the contrary, an effect is quickly obtained; though, of course,



No. 71.—Design for Chair-back, suggested by sixteenth-century work—strap-work ornament, to be incised and embossed. The background can be punched over, as indicated.

leather embossing can be brought to a high degree of artistic finish. It is obvious from the brief description given that thick leather, such as pig skin or stout calf, yields the best result, as the very depth of the material gives the worker so much more scope.

The natural colour of the skin, too, seems to be more suitable to the process than dyed leather like morocco, though some workers stain portions of the design with liquid dyes. If this be done artistically, the effect is enhanced, as the natural surface of the leather is in no way



No. 72.—Chair Seat. To go with Design No. 71.

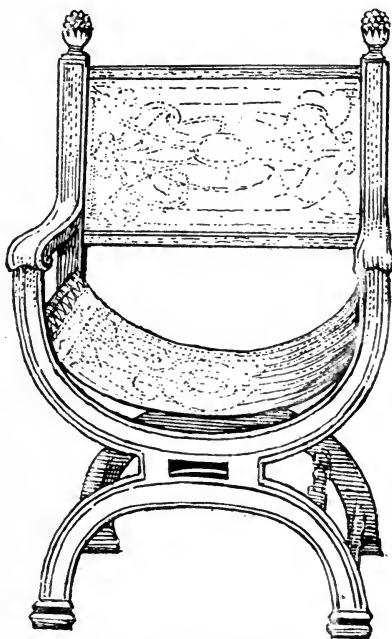
impaired. Miss Bassett, in the bindings wrought under her direction at Leighton Buzzard, uses stains upon the leather, keeping the tint very pale, afterwards varnishing the leather with the proper medium.

I am inclined to think that quite sufficient relief can be obtained without the necessity of using wax at the back. Miss Bassett produces some effective calf bindings with blind tooling (*i.e.* tooling without the use of gold), with some parts of the design in low relief. For book covers it is undoubtedly a mistake to raise the design too highly, as these portions would soon rub and become shabby.

Those readers who have got their 'prentice hand in will have no difficulty in trying experiments in new directions, suggested possibly by these notes; but to the beginner, it

would certainly be advisable to get a few lessons under a practical binder. Method is so much quicker acquired by seeing than by hearing, while the use of tools can alone be imparted by practical demonstration. With a basis of knowledge it is easy to add fresh methods to one's existing craftsmanship.

In speaking of the designs I have schemed out to accompany these hints, I may point out that they must be looked upon as suggestive notes or diagrams, and in no way as indicating the effects to be obtained by the processes used. Only photographs of actual work can render, in even a faint degree, the look of work in leather. Of course, I kept steadily before



No. 73.—Design for Chair with leather back and seat. See Figs. 71 and 72 for the details.

myself the method of production, and endeavoured in all cases to draw such effects as could be adequately rendered by the means employed. It is only by remembering how your effects are obtained, and the tools employed in securing the results, that one can design for the

craft. The designs I have drawn may be looked upon as experiments which in the carrying out would need to be modified or altered. As I have said elsewhere, a design should really grow under the fingers, and it can never be wholly realised on paper, nor should the craftsman be too much tied and bound by his diagram. No. 77 is a design for a wallet to hang on a wall to contain papers, with a place for calendar. The decoration could be tooled and embossed or incised and embossed, but the beating up of certain forms like the tulip flower is essential in such a design if the full effect is to be obtained. These flower forms might be further accentuated by being tinted with dyes. The dark parts around the edge of the wallet might be punched with stars. The making of the wallet itself would present no difficulty to one used to working in leather. It should have a backing of good *hard* millboard to hang against the wall, the divisions for papers could be flexible, and if the front were made of a stout piece of calf, it would not require any backing, though this is a matter that can be left to the worker's discretion.

The cover design, No. 74, is designed to suit tooling, though it could also be incised and embossed. It is a highly ornamentalised treatment of foliage, a distinct feature being made of the twisting of the stems around the supports, which could be adequately rendered by tooling or incising.

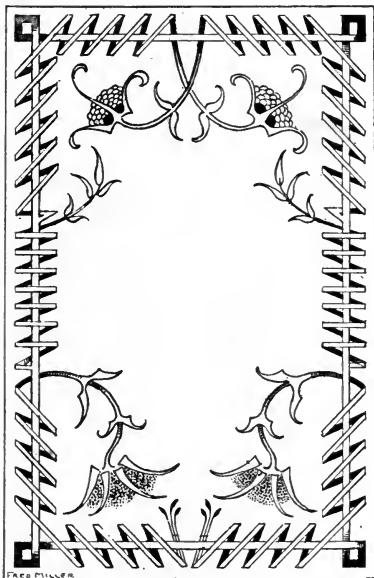
No. 70 is suggested by a class of design to which the name Renaissance is loosely given. A book cover of Mr. Jacobsen's suggested the present design. The portions enclosed by the "strap work" border is intended to be punched with stars or dots. This "strap work" is a

distinct feature in the work of the sixteenth century, and is most ingeniously twisted and planned.

As regards the designs, Nos. 71 and 72, I have modelled them upon some strap-work carved panels, French work of the middle of the sixteenth century. This strap work is so obviously fitted for being reproduced by incising and embossing, and is in itself so ingenious and effective, that I could not give, it seems to me, more suitable schemes of decoration for leather.

Chair backs and seats are obviously such admirable articles to engage the amateur's attention that I have devoted some space to making designs for these purposes. I give a sketch of a chair suitable for leather work.

Those readers who wish to get chairs made to a particular design should find out a chair-maker to the trade and get an estimate, when it will be found that the charge is not so heavy as they anticipate. Of course, large and elaborate chairs,



No. 74.—Design for Book-cover. Suggested by the twisting of a tendril around a stem; to be produced by tooling or incising and embossing.

such as the one sketched in No. 73, would cost some five pounds at least, but then they are imposing pieces of furniture. In one I saw the leather for back and seat was "laced" in position with stout leather thongs (and so is the seat in No. 73), and was decidedly effective so fastened to the frame.

The other design, No. 75, is of quite a different genre



No. 75.—Design supported by Heraldry, to be wrought by incising and embossing.

to the other examples, being heraldic in character. Quaint 'beasts' are always excellent *motifs* in designs for the crafts. The embossing here would come into play with great effect ; but instead of incising use blind tooling to get the effect shown in No. 67. In the heraldic beast the foliated background should be kept pretty flat, so as to give prominence to the animal. Heraldry is full of decorative sug-

gestiveness, and might be drawn largely upon by designers. No. 85 would be suitable for blind tooling, while the background around the foliage and 'beast' might be punched over so as to throw the design into relief.

No. 76 might be considered somewhat rococo, but in endeavouring to get away from the class of design one is familiar with one must experiment. It would be easy to carry out this for a blotter or music folio, and I think it would look effective. In using insect forms in this way the general shape of the creature only is considered, no reference to a particular species being made.

No. 78 is intended to be embossed, coloured and lacquered in the way of

the old Spanish leathers. Quaint renderings of animal forms give interest and variety to a design, and if treated quite simply and ornamentally need not frighten the amateur away by fear of difficulty. A study of heraldic beasts will be of use in showing how to simplify and ornamentalise nature. Besides book covers, many other objects can be worked in leather, such as jewel and other boxes.



No. 76.—Design for Book-cover, for incising and embossing, or tooling.

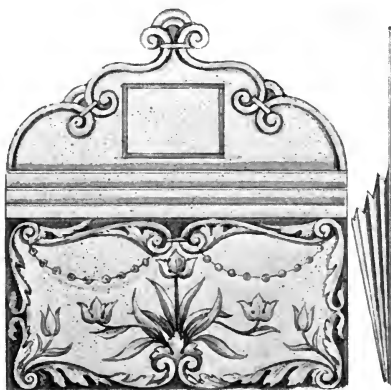
Figures in decoration should, to a great extent, be treated as animal forms are—being simplified and thought of more as “shapes” than as representations of persons. By choosing children or cupids we escape many of the difficulties inseparable from adults.

There has been a revival of embossed and painted leather for wall-coverings, screens, and other purposes, to which old Spanish leathers are put, and I see no reason why the amateur should not essay works of this kind. The difficulties are certainly not as great as they are in book-binding, for you have only to decorate flat pieces of leather—as the joining of these together, so as to cover a large surface, only requires the care a paperhanger gives to expensive wall-papers. The effect of the old Spanish leathers is due to two things, the rich colouring, in which gilding plays an important part, and the embossing. The leather had, I believe, a backing of thick paper glued on to it, and this kept the portions hammered up in relief. The manipulation would have to be effected, to a large extent, while the backing was plastic. I have an idea that the skin should be manipulated in the way I have described by being beaten out at the back, and those parts in low relief pressed down from the front, and that if two or three sheets of good stout brown paper were well soaked in glue and the back of the leather also glued, and the paper then pressed well home, those portions in relief should be again pressed out from the back before the backing dries, as well as the leather being pressed down from the front until the required relief be obtained. Or it might be enough merely to glue thicknesses of paper on to those portions in relief, well working them into the hollows ; though I should say—for



I have not yet put it to the test of actual experiment—that the effect could be carried further if you had the paper all over the back, as there would then be so much more substance to manipulate. The leather might be incised, and treated in much the same way as I have already described; though, from what I remember, the Spanish leathers are blind-tooled in front. Of course the work should be freer and the designs bolder than in a book cover.

As regards the colouring, two plans can be adopted: to dye or stain the leather, or paint it solidly in ordinary oil colour. The former plan is certainly the better adapted to the material, as it seems a pity to lose the surface of the leather, which you do if you paint it, though this was the plan adopted



No. 77.—Design for Wallet. Decorated with incising and embossing.

in the old Spanish leathers. The transparent colours used by artists could be employed, thinned with turpentine, to which is added a very little hard dry varnish, such as amber or copal. Prussian blue, cobalt green, terre verte, viridian, gamboge, raw and burnt sienna, madder brown, Indian yellow, and golden ochre are among some of the most useful. If solid colours be used they should be mixed with varnish and floated on freely, and not be touched after they have begun to set. Your scheme of colour,

therefore, must be decided upon, and your manipulation must be rapid, as when these varnish colours get tacky, it is almost impossible to use them. Semi-solid colour could be introduced in spots, say the flowers of a design, or in the one I give, No. 78, the bird, animals, snake, and frog could be slightly heightened [with white or cream used transparently. The leaves could be in rich varied greens, made of Prussian blue, raw sienna, golden ochre, gamboge, or Indian yellow, in varying proportions, and the stems in madder brown.

The animals should be in high relief, and the leaves might be incised at the edges, while the stems and ribs down centre of each leaf could be tooled on. The background could have its surface broken up by being punched over with disc punches; and they should not be as small as those used on a book cover, as the surface to be decorated is so much greater. The foliage part of the design, as will be noticed, is an ornamental treatment of a tree planned as a series of scrolls, and could be continued indefinitely. A dado of a library or smoking room would look very rich decorated with leathers; so, too, would a screen. A design planned to repeat in much the same way as a wall-paper does, or as the old Spanish leathers did, would be suitable, as it materially lessens the work of having to sketch each section separately.

In some examples of coloured leather I saw at a friend's house the pigment was partially wiped off, and the warm yellow of the cowhide showing through produced a very rich and harmonious effect.

There is plenty of room for experiments in colouring leather, as the Screen No. 69 shown at the Paris Exhibition evidences, for here we have a work in which tooling,



No. 78.—Suggested design for embossed leather Wall Hangings. The dotted lines show where the joins might be made. The animal forms to be in relief. This design could also be treated in poker work.

embossing and colouring are blended. The effect of the boats on the water is highly pictorial, and yet the material itself is considered, as the clouds have a blind tooled outline and the water is treated ornamentally.

It is hardly necessary to say that leather to be coloured should be light, as then the colouring can be semi-transparent so that the surface on which you work plays its part in the finished effect.

Of other methods of colouring mention may be made of applying colour to the under-surface of vellum, which, being semi-transparent, allows of the colouring being seen through the vellum.

With the three processes of "tooling," "incising" and "embossing," either employed singly or in combination, the craftsman has great resources at command, and a very varied class of effects are within his reach. I should have no hesitation in using all three in the same piece of work, so long as you keep within your means and make no attempt at imitating one kind of work in another medium. The material one works in should be highly prized and the utmost value given to it, else what is the use of working in leather if, when our work is finished, all trace of leather be lost? I imagine one uses leather as one does other materials, because if rightly used it will yield a certain class of effects such as nothing else will give us. It was this consideration that made me advocate the employment of dyes with transparent colours in tinting leather, so that even here the surface of the leather shall not be obliterated, but made to yield its quota to the finished result.

Coloured leather work should always be well varnished when finished.

## CHAPTER VII.

### INLAYING IN COLOURED WOODS AND STAINED-WOOD DECORATION.



THE exhibitions held in the Albert Hall of the work executed under the stimulus of the Home Arts Association are to be seen some clever and original designs carried out in coloured wood inlays, showing that those responsible for the treatment had stepped out of the groove, and by thus breaking away from tradition had obtained some novel and striking effects. I shall in the space at my disposal take a brief survey of the craft of the inlayer and marquetry cutter, and by directing the reader's attention to some of the methods that may be followed, open up to him fresh possibilities, and, I hope, start his mind on a new track.

An important consideration in studying any branch of work is to approach it with an open mind. In Gilbert's "Trial by Jury," the judge's refrain is "from bias free of every kind"; and the designer can with advantage take this charge to heart, for the first thing one has to do in

making an original effort is to forget, or banish for the while, all the familiar devices and well-worn ways—to disinfect, as it were, one's mind, and then there is some chance of it acting with freshness, and doing something that has not been done before in quite the same way; for,



No. 79.—Wood Inlay, by the Pimlico Class, under the Hon. Mrs. Carpenter.

of course, we all know there is nothing new under the sun. To be one's self, to act spontaneously from one's own initiative, and free from self-consciousness, so that one gives expression to what is within—one's *ego*, in fact—is to be original, I take it, and therefore style *is* individuality, the expression of one's self. Some critics have censured me for advocating a doctrine with such insistence, because there will be no "style" in work done under such a controlling idea, they

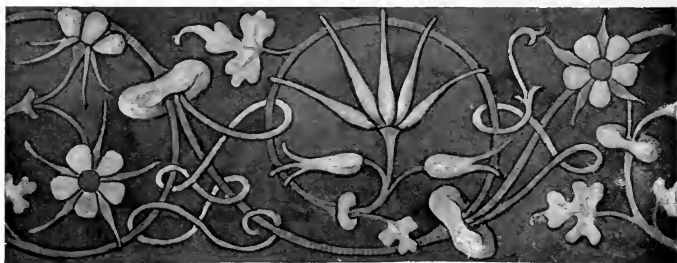
say. I fail to see what these critics mean, for if a man doesn't give himself in his work, what does he give? The personal note is everything, the one quality which makes one's work live and interest other people. The following of tradition—the being trammelled at the start by



No. 80.—Wardrobe by Messrs. Majorelle Frères, showing naturalesque inlay and carving. (In the Paris Exhibition, 1903.)

what *has* been done—paralyses the worker, and in thus being but a shadow of some one stronger than one's self is always to be behind.

It is not necessary to enunciate such a truism that we are all the result of what has gone before, for what we have seen and studied passes into our being, becoming part of our mental fibre, and, whether we will or not, it is bound to find expression in any effort towards originality we make; but that is not the same thing as putting on some other worker's glasses, and seeing everything as he saw it. If we



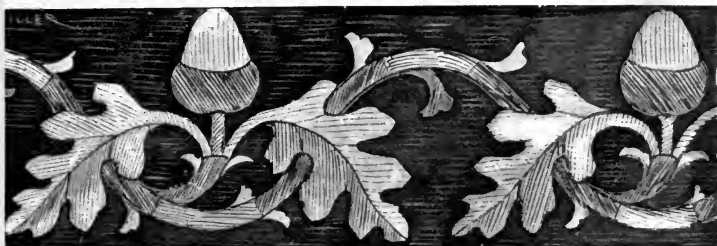
No. 81.—Ornamental repeating Border in which nature is only hinted at, no one plant being taken, but suggestions from many. The seed-pods and flowers are modelled on the Columbine, but the ornamental planning of the design is the first consideration.

are going to make an original effort (not quite the same thing, by the way, as being original) we must forget what has been done, we must leave the well-worn path and strike into the unknown. Whether that will bring us to our goal is another matter; but many of us are willing to forego what the Academicians call style (which I take to mean the falling into a certain definite groove, so that we can be



pigeon-holed in the critics' mental bureau) for the sake of individuality.

In the craft of the inlayer, for instance, one cannot, unfortunately, forget the dozens of well-known patterns which one has seen let into furniture. This traditional art, with its well-recognised formulæ, shackles us, preventing all free movement; and even the French, who are more hide-bound by tradition than we are, are beginning to see that this is fatal to progress and virility. The consequence is



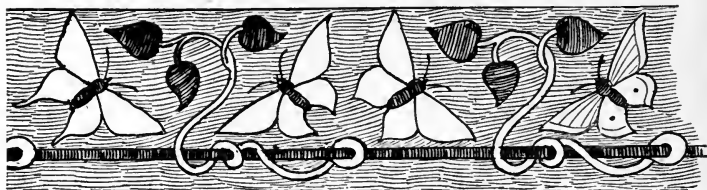
No. 82.—Simple Border, founded on the Oak. Only the simplest facts of the plant are taken, while the stem is treated as pure ornament.

that in the Paris Exhibition some of the most interesting departures are to be found in that group of French craftsmen who have gone so far as to quit Paris and settle in the provinces. The Wardrobe, No. 80, is an example of the new spirit that is abroad, and those readers who did not go to the Exhibition itself should refer to the Extra Paris Number of *THE ART JOURNAL*, in which examples of the modern movement on the Continent may be seen.

In some designs, No. 81 for instance, I purposely work on traditional lines, because I wish to give the student as wide a choice of subject as possible; but where I do so, I

try to import certain personal touches into the scheme though I must admit I find it very difficult to do this where the motifs are so well known as in this so-called French Renaissance work.

Professional designers are too often compelled to do work in the style of such-and-such a period, because, having to earn their living, they have no choice but to do what they are paid for doing ; but I think I am speaking for most of them when I say that they would far prefer being asked to make an "original" design, freshness of treatment being the only condition imposed. The amateur



No. 83.—Continuous Border of conventionalised plant and insect forms. The leaf stems are made into an ornamental feature. The insects might be formed of mother-of-pearl or ivory.

craftsman is under no obligation to work in a particular groove, but can give rein to his fancy and do just as it dictates ; and I can only hope that some of my strivings, where I have imposed no artificial conditions, will act as a stimulus when my readers essay something original ; for the best use they can put my designs to, is to use them as data or notes, and not as dogmas.

In designing inlays, the first thing to remember is the method of reproduction. The design is composed of a number of pieces which have to be cut out of very thin

wood (veneers) and let into the surface to be decorated. A certain simplicity, even severity, should characterise our design. We must think of everything as a shape, as a silhouette in fact, and *not* as a transcript of nature. A certain ingenuity, therefore, should be displayed in the way we combine our forms, seeing that there is no chance given us of showing our skill in giving a "true and faithfull coppie" of the natural form, such as can be exhibited by the painter. Nature can be taken, indeed must be taken, as our guide and stimulus, but we must allow our fancy and ingenuity free play, and above all we must be restrained by



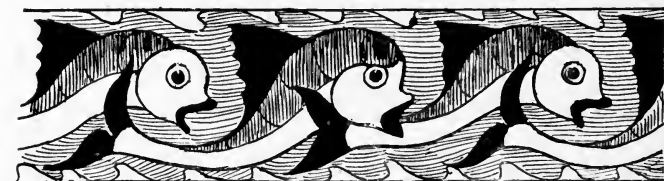
No. 84.—Simple continuous Border, in which the stems are made the leading feature, nature being only distantly suggested in the "fruit" and "leaves."

the limitations imposed on us by our craft. We can take the utmost licence with nature, twist a stem into a zigzag, continuous scroll, or other geometrical device, develop a tendril or a leaf-stem until it becomes a purely ornamental feature, take what we want, and leave out what we do not want of the plant form selected as the basis of our design; and accordingly as we do this with fitness, ingenuity, balance, suitability to method of reproduction, to that extent shall we be successful.

The amateur must remember that designing is not taking a natural form and reproducing it in a certain conventional

way, but is developing ideas suggested by nature, and carrying them out harmoniously. The final result may bear so distant a resemblance to the natural form as to be recognised only by ourselves. One might with advantage remember Rubinstein's aphorism that "grapes are nature, but wine is art." Our design can bear the same relationship to nature as champagne does to the grape, which is sometimes a very distant one. As I shall give a brief description of each design, we will pass on to the technical consideration of inlaying.

Those amateurs taking up the craft would do well to get

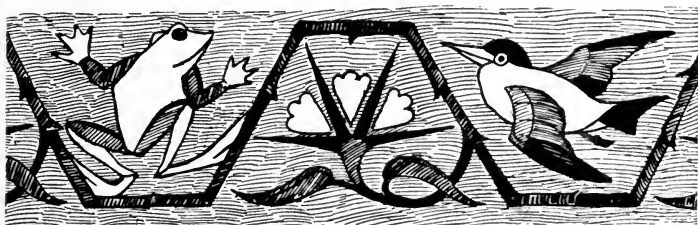


No. 85.—Border formed of two repeating fish-like forms; at the top and bottom are borders of "waves."

half-a-dozen lessons of a cabinet-maker used to inlaying; for in large firms some men are kept for nothing else, though most good cabinet-makers understand simple inlaying. It is possible to obtain the most beautiful coloured effects by inlaying, as we can use any material, from wood, in its infinite variety of colours, to mother-of-pearl, ivory, and metals. I have seen some quaint effects produced by inlaying light oak with pewter, while some refined and beautiful ones have been produced by using engraved ivory, especially for the class of design seen in No. 91, as details can be engraved on the ivory, and these

engraved lines filled in with black. Where a design is carried out in two or three woods of similar tones, say yellow brown, variety can be given by using the wood of the inlays in various directions. A good deal of the seventeenth-century Dutch inlaid furniture (marquetry) is wrought in two or three woods, varying from yellow to browns, so that the general effect is a harmony in browns.

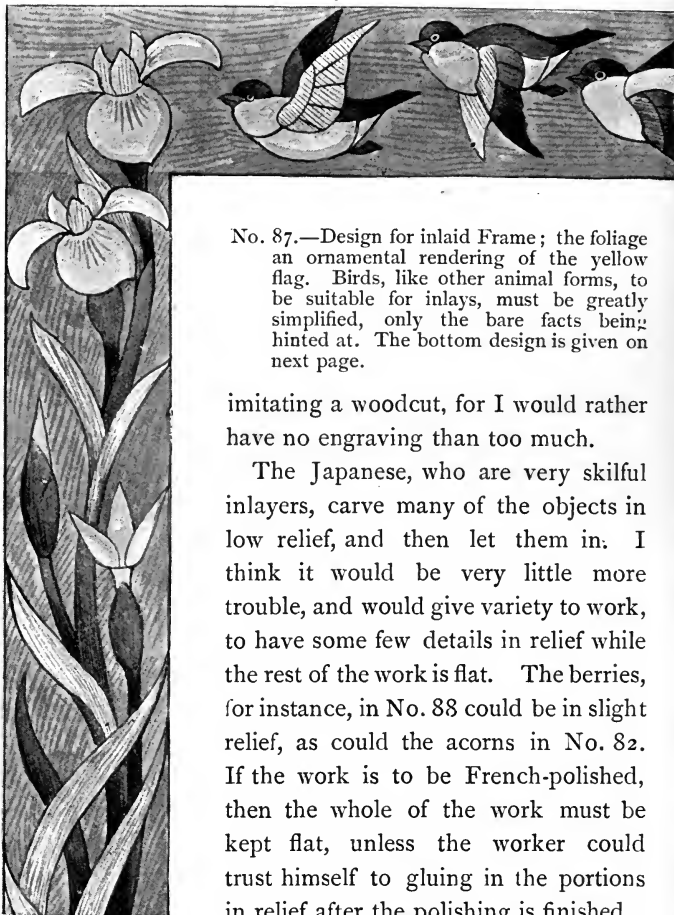
There are two points to be observed in inlaying: to cut the pieces accurately to fit into the recesses made for them, and to thoroughly glue them in with fresh, strong, boiling



No. 86.—Border, which can be repeated *ad lib.*, of alternate plant and animal forms. These latter could be varied so that no two were alike, while the foliage portion is the same in each section.

hot glue, so that there is no danger of the inlays coming out; a weight should be kept upon them until the work is dry. In patterns repeated a number of times the design should be transferred to the wood by marking it over carbon paper with a hard-point, and also on the inlays themselves from the same tracing, as this will tend to insure accuracy; but care must be exercised in cutting out the spaces and the inlays, for there is always the danger of departing from the transferred lines. Where light woods are used, detail can be put in by engraving, and then

rubbing in some dark colour. Thus the veins in leaves can be indicated in this way; but there must be no attempt at



No. 87.—Design for inlaid Frame; the foliage an ornamental rendering of the yellow flag. Birds, like other animal forms, to be suitable for inlays, must be greatly simplified, only the bare facts being hinted at. The bottom design is given on next page.

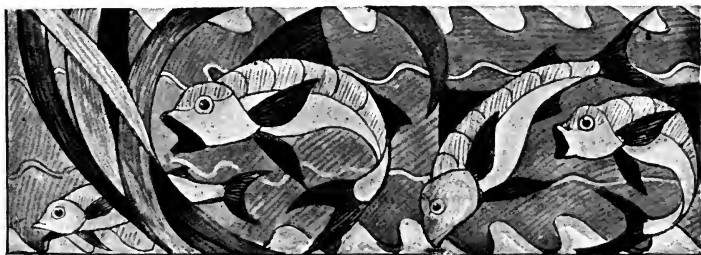
imitating a woodcut, for I would rather have no engraving than too much.

The Japanese, who are very skilful inlayers, carve many of the objects in low relief, and then let them in. I think it would be very little more trouble, and would give variety to work, to have some few details in relief while the rest of the work is flat. The berries, for instance, in No. 88 could be in slight relief, as could the acorns in No. 82. If the work is to be French-polished, then the whole of the work must be kept flat, unless the worker could trust himself to gluing in the portions in relief after the polishing is finished.

A perfectly legitimate form of wood decoration, and one

comparatively easy to do, is to reproduce the design by staining the wood. Much of the effect of inlaying can be obtained in this way, though there is no reason why stained-wood decoration should not be developed on its own lines, and not masquerade as something else. A light wood should be used, so that the various coloured stains will tell, which they would not do on a dark one.

The design can be outlined with a fine rigger or sable liner, or a free working pen can be used with stain in lieu of ink. An effective form I have seen this stained decoration



take is to put in a background of dark brown, using the stain freely, so that instead of obtaining a perfectly flat ground you get a broken up surface, darker in some places than others. The design of seaweed and sea-horses, No. 89, would be suitable for this treatment, as would Nos. 90 and 91. There are several makes of stain sold, among them Stephens'. Transparent water-colours could be employed, so could those in oil diluted with turpentine; but transparent woodstains better preserve the grain of the wood, and when French-polished give a very pleasing result. The polishing should be done by a professional, as few amateurs

get into the knack of using a rubber, which is the way the polish is put on, and the decoration will be spoilt if the polishing is badly done. All the designs given could be reproduced in staining, though certain modifications can be made, as one is not so tied down where you use a brush and a liquid as when you inlay. In the Wardrobe, No. 80, the pictorial effect is carried very far, in fact the effect of a painting is arrived at. Enormous skill is necessary to cut and fit the various coloured woods into so elaborate a scheme, and the amateur should be content to essay something much more severely simple.

It now remains to append a few notes on the illustrations themselves, so I will take them almost in order. The reader will understand that little or no attempt is made to give the effect of inlaying, that being next to an impossibility for one thing, and then again my chief object is to give the student suggestions which he must work out for himself, adapting and modifying them as circumstances demand.

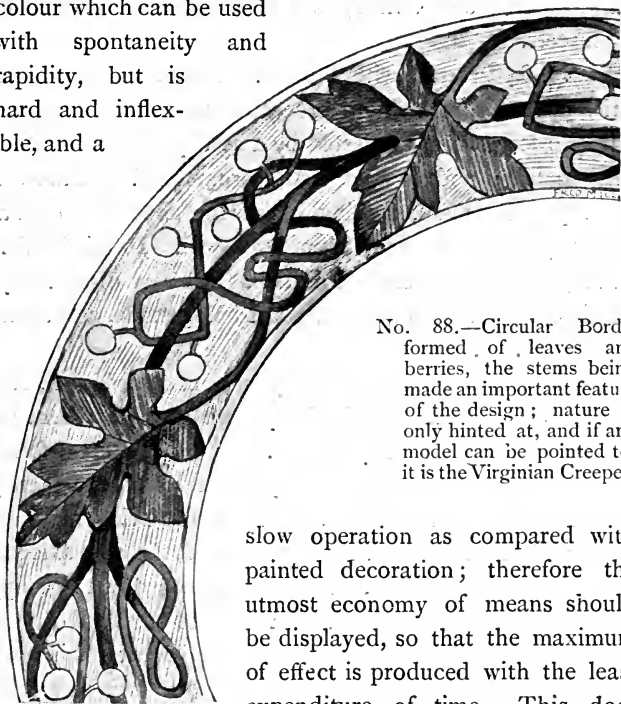
No. 81 is very ornamental in character, the details being distributed around a waved line running through the border. All the details are suggested by various plant growths, the columbine being specially drawn upon, though by no means adhered to, as the entwining tendril has no counterpart in the aquilegia.

This class of work, in which nature is suggested without any particular plant being specified, should commend itself to amateurs, as success is not so difficult of attainment here as it is in the more ornamental styles of design.

No. 82 is founded upon the oak, but only the shape of the leaves and acorns is followed, the stem being treated as



pure ornament. In taking nature as a basis it does not follow that a close adherence to fact is obligatory. Your skill as a designer is shown in the way nature is modified and adapted to suit the work in hand. A certain simplicity is a necessity of the case, for our inlay is not like a brush of colour which can be used with spontaneity and rapidity, but is hard and inflexible, and a



No. 88.—Circular Border formed of leaves and berries, the stems being made an important feature of the design; nature is only hinted at, and if any model can be pointed to, it is the Virginian Creeper.

slow operation as compared with painted decoration; therefore the utmost economy of means should be displayed, so that the maximum of effect is produced with the least expenditure of time. This does not imply that the work should be done hastily and scamped, but that the design should suit the means of reproduction. In selecting the woods, arrange them so that you obtain relief between the different parts of the design; a kind of light and shade, as it were.

No. 83 is of simple character; but if some choice material, such as pearl shell or ivory, could be introduced into the butterflies, the effect would be enhanced. If a light wood be used the worker could add to his work, and possibly to the effect of the design, by engraving a few markings on the butterflies, as I have indicated on one of the insects.

In No. 84 I started with the central line, which forms a series of curves, and then I proceeded to fill out the spaces with two forms, one suggested by a seed-pod and the other a triple leaf; and to add to its ornamental character I developed the stalk, making it entwine about the central line, very much as a nasturtium stalk will. In this border, nature, though suggested, is hinted at in a very distant way, no direct reference to any one plant being made, as was the case in No. 82.

The border composed of highly ornamentalised fish, No. 85, would look effective in inlay, and should present no special difficulty in carrying out. In using animal forms for such work nature must be very much simplified—merely the generalised shape taken, no reference being made to any one fish. In the next design, No. 86, the animal forms are treated as ornaments, and are so arranged as to occupy the spaces. Beginners must fight against the tendency of being too natural in their efforts to invent their own patterns. Think of all objects as shapes. If it be a bird, for instance, don't think of feathers and colour, but of the simple facts of wings, head and beak, tail and feet, and forget all else.

No. 87 shows the treatment of a mirror or other frame. The foliage part of the scheme is more *naturalesque* than several of the other designs, and is a simplified rendering of



No. 89.—Panel of Seaweed, highly ornamented, and Sea-horses. The seaweed is made to fit the space and form a background and as a "conceit" (though it has its warranty in nature) grows out of a shell. This design would reproduce in stains.



No. 90.—Quaint renderings of Frogs, Bird, Lizard and Insects, with Fungi. Animal forms are effective in inlays, but must be kept very simple.

the yellow flag. As regards the colouring, this need not be natural in the sense of having green leaves. You might strive for a harmony in yellows and browns, getting the necessary relief by opposing a light colour against a darker one. Stained woods can be purchased of veneer merchants, and if desirable a great variety of colour can be obtained in this way, but simple harmonies with the use of only a few woods are to be preferred to a more extended palette.

No. 88 would do for a border at the edge of a round table. A distinct feature is made of the entwining stalks. A harmony in reds and warm browns would be suitable as regards colouring, taking autumn foliage as a guide.

The introduction of birds, frogs, lizards, insects, and animals into inlays, gives a good deal of character to work. Such objects, as I have elsewhere hinted, must be no mere transcripts of nature, but they must be designed as carefully as the ornamental details, and treated as ornament rather than bits from nature. A feature is made of animal forms in No. 90, and to add to the "quaintness" of the effect fungi are introduced as accessories.

A good deal of variety may be obtained by using the grain of the wood in various directions, for the same colour will look quite different seen at different angles.

Seaweed is full of ornamental suggestions, and though many designers have used it with considerable effect, this order of the vegetable kingdom is too much neglected by them. The panel, No. 89, would be very suitable for stained-wood decoration, as the background could be floated in, not evenly all over, but darker in some places than others. The sea-horses are very ornamental crea-

tures, and give variety and interest to the rest of the design.

Figures have always been introduced into inlays, and when treated ornamentally rather than realistically add greatly to the interest of a design. In some cases boxwood



No. 91.—Ornamental Figure Panel of boy riding on a dragon-fly and driving insects. This could be reproduced in stained decoration.

or ivory have been the materials employed, and the details have been engraved on, and filled in with black. Of course this is an added difficulty, and should not be attempted by the tyro unless he feels capable of doing this with some success. In fact figures are best avoided unless they are adequately rendered, as if badly done they mar the whole

effect. They would present far fewer difficulties if reproduced in stain, as the outlines and details can be put in with a pen or fine brush. As regards the figures themselves, they should fit in with the general scheme of decoration, and really form part of the design. The French in their decorations in the last century were very successful in introducing children or cupids into their designs, one reason being that they are rendered with comparative ease as compared with figures of adults; such *motifs*, too, look graceful and fanciful in the bargain. They are certainly more within the scope of amateurs than "grown-ups." That class of design, grouped under the name "Renaissance," has much in it that a designer can study with profit, for it is full of ingenuity and is usually very well planned, with a nice sense of balance and proportion. The objection I have to it as a source of inspiration, is that it is exceedingly difficult to be individual where all the *motifs* are so well known—even hackneyed. In the one, No. 91, there is no such trammelling, and if the insects could be put in with pearl shell, and the figure in white wood or box on a dark ground, a good effect could be produced.

How little a design on paper suggests the effect of inlaying can be seen by referring to Nos. 79 and 80. In the late Paris Exhibition some quite remarkable works were shown. Plants like the hemlock were treated as veneers by skilfully massing the forms and only giving the general shape of the heads of flowers. The veneers used were chiefly tones of brown, so that the whole effect was a beautiful harmony. Much of this inlaid furniture was unpolished or only waxed.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### GESSO, OR PAINTING IN RELIEF, AND ALLIED PROCESSES.



ESSO is the name given to a composition which can be used while moist with a brush or other instrument, and loaded on the surface to be decorated, in greater or less relief. This hardens as it dries, so that when the moisture has quite evaporated the composition is both durable and capable of receiving colour. Skill is soon acquired in using gesso, as it can be made of the consistency of thick cream, so as to come freely from a long-haired brush. The worker can paint gesso over gesso until considerable relief is obtained, and this is the only way any great amount of relief can be secured; though it is important to see that the coat of gesso below is hard before putting more on, for if the composition be loaded on very thickly it cracks in the drying. For the decoration of wood gesso is admirable, and it is a great gain, as those who try it will admit, to be able to obtain a certain amount of relief in painted decoration. Not that you wish in any way to imitate carving, for that should not at all be the aim of the worker in gesso, but instead of painting up your decoration

to obtain quality and relief, you can easily develop the design you are working by giving prominence to certain portions of it by putting the gesso on thickly in these places, while certain parts of the design can have little or none applied. As I am chiefly addressing amateurs, I can



No. 92. — One of the Panels in Coloured Relief, executed for the Trocadero Restaurant. Designed by Gerald Moira, Modelled by F. Lynn Jenkins.

fancy the question being asked, “Why take the trouble to obtain this relief; wouldn’t painted decoration be sufficient?”

To that I reply: Relief is relief, and it gives a very different effect to the design to have it carried out in low-relief than if it were merely painted, as no amount of skilful



brush-work can produce the effect gesso gives. A reference to the panel, No. 92, demonstrates better than words how the modelling helps the painting. Furthermore, an amateur will find working in gesso a fascinating occupation, yielding



No. 93.—Two Gesso Panels from the Pulpit of Teddington Church.  
Designed and executed by Mr. Reginald Hallward.

a more satisfactory result than can be obtained by paint alone. He will see his work growing under his fingers (or his brush), and by obtaining success (of a kind) at the outset he will be led on to attempt more difficult effects,

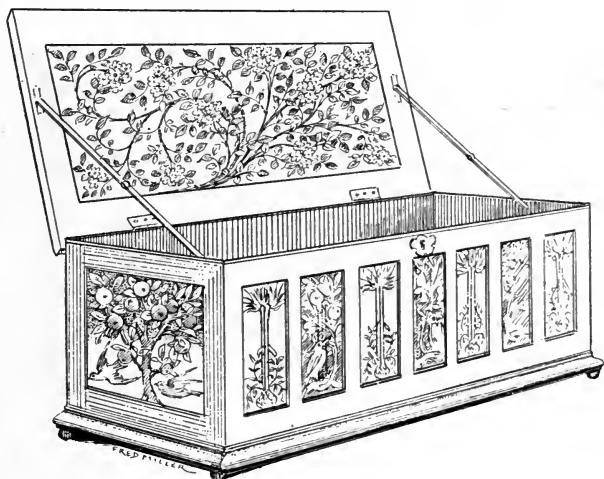
and thus unconsciously develop his craft. In painted decoration, on the other hand, the amateur is apt to find the difficulties increase rather than diminish in carrying the work as far as is desirable, and there is the likelihood of his finally giving up in despair owing to the condition of muddle reached in his attempt to produce a satisfactory result. Gesso, unlike paint, seems such a pleasant material to play



No. 94.—Decorated Writing Cabinet, the front to be made to let down. The design is a free treatment of some flowering shrub, though no direct reference to any one plant is made. As will be noticed, the stems are made an ornamental feature.

with. You blob it on and bring out your design by getting the gesso on thicker in places as your fancy or copy suggests, and you never reach that state of imbecility which is arrived at all too soon by the amateur oil-painter. I recall my own first efforts in the use of oil colour and the hopeless condition I soon got in. There are few more difficult things to manage at the outset than oil colours—

Ruskin said it was the most difficult of all handwork—and to obtain any mastery is a matter of considerable practice. Gesso is like modelling in this respect, that many an amateur who cannot paint an object can give an adequate rendering of it in clay or wax, as he can **finger and tool** the plastic material about until the desired effect is obtained.

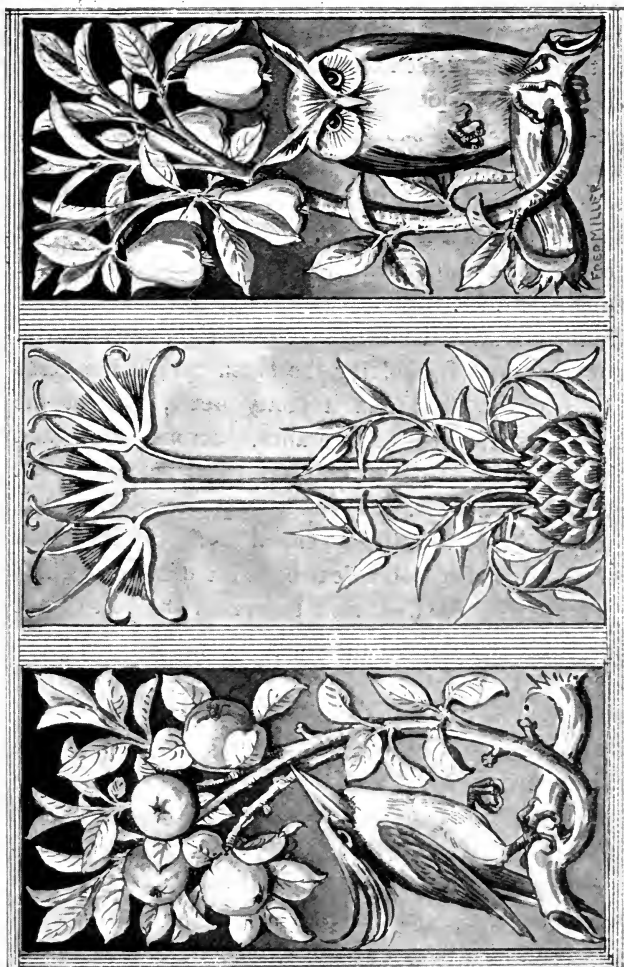


No. 95.—Design for Coffier, with decorated panel and lid.  
For details see No. 96.

There are more ornamental possibilities in a craft like gesso than in painting, as is seen by carrying out the same simple design both in paint and gesso. It will have a quality and value in the latter which it cannot have in the former, unless a great deal more technical skill is possessed by the painter in oils than the worker in gesso, and this quite apart from the uses to which gesso can be put where painting would

be of small effect. To make this clear, take a picture or other frame, say of oak. We could, by putting some simple running-pattern upon it in gesso, break up the flat surface of the frame agreeably, and this after very little practice in the use of our new material; but to obtain a decoration of *equal ornamental value* in painting would require a much longer apprenticeship, and then, however well it might be painted, it would *not be in relief*, and this alone makes gesso of use as a decorative agent where paint would be of small service.

Mr. Reginald Hallward, three of whose gesso panels are here reproduced, No. 93, uses plaster of Paris and fish-glue, and he tells me that it makes admirable gesso, easily manipulated when warm, and drying very hard. He sizes the wood first, and this can be done with glue thinned down with boiling water. Of course, the size must be allowed to dry before applying the gesso. Mr. Hallward, who works a good deal in this material, tells me that he relies upon the brush almost entirely. He takes the gesso up in a rather long-haired brush (a rigger), and lets it flow out on to the panel, and this gives a certain "blobby" quality to the decoration which makes it differ from stained plaster or other work in relief. The worker merely repeats the operation where he requires higher relief until it is obtained. Of course, there is a limit to the amount of relief that should be attempted, for the worker must remember that he is not a sculptor carving a bas-relief, but a decorator painting in relief, and his work should therefore be frankly what it is, work in gesso, and not a bastard sort of carving. A material called "Denoline" can be purchased in tins which makes very good gesso, and saves the trouble of making a composition for oneself.



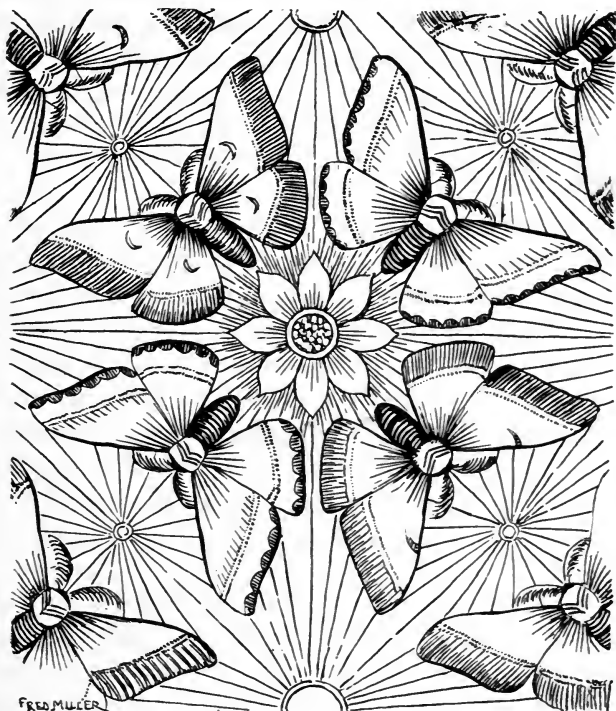
No. 96.—Panels for Decoration of Coffers (see No. 95). The one on left is suggested by the apple, and that on the right by the pear, while the centre one is still more ornamental in character. The birds are suggested by the laughing jackass and long-eared owl.

Gesso can be tooled up with sharp instruments, and scraped down and otherwise manipulated, and if sharpness of contour is desired then the knife can be used freely.

Where any considerable amount of relief is desired cotton-wool or fibre should be soaked in the gesso and stuck on the surface, and the form built up in this way, as when this foundation has dried more gesso can be painted on if a better surface is required. The wool keeps the gesso hollow to some extent, and there is then no danger of it cracking as it dries.

What is known as a "brush-work" design, such as No. 94, suits gesso, as by holding the brush upright the gesso can be made to flow from it pretty freely, so that the work has a spontaneous appearance. Scrolls, curves, and continuous forms made up of curves, can be rapidly put in after a little practice. A round, long camel-hair pencil, not too small, does well for general work, as it holds a lot of gesso, and a good deal of effect can be obtained by just pressing on the brush to spread the hair in the broad part of a leaf, and gradually lifting the brush up so that as the end of the leaf is neared, the point only is used. The leaves on the cabinet, No. 94, could be produced by pressing on the brush in the broad part, and letting it come to a point at the end, and where the darks come here the gesso could be loaded on to give the effect of a leaf turned over. It is difficult to describe in writing what is meant by "brush-work," but those who are familiar with Japanese decoration will follow me. A Jap takes a full brush of colour, and by dexterously pressing on the hair as the leaf widens, he is able to suggest the form without drawing an outline. What artists call accidental qualities

are obtained in this way, and there is always a greater charm about that which comes by a happy accident (though it requires a very skilled directing judgment to give the



No. 97.—Design for a Diaper of Ornamental Moths, with a filling of lines or rays. The moths could be largely reproduced by stencilling.

“accident” its proper turn), than what is the product of calm deliberation; and it is easy to understand why. Work looks the more life-like the more spontaneous it is,

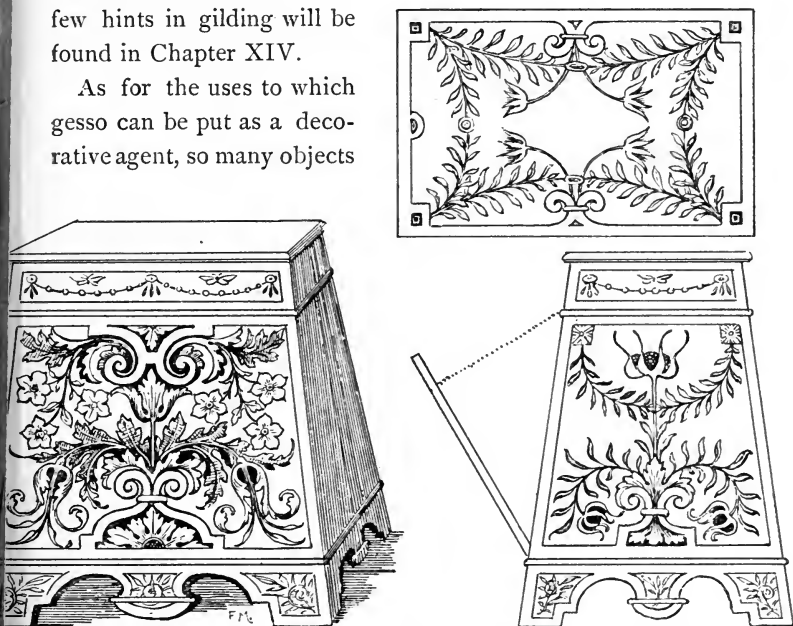
and technical skill should exhibit itself in certainty of utterance, so that you have not to resort to stippling, and small dodges of that kind, to hide your blundering and bungling. And apart from that it is well recognised by all workers that effects often come by accident which *cannot* be obtained by deliberation. You must be master of your material or it will soon master you, and therefore a free treatment will lead to better results than purely painstaking effort where your method of work is revealed instead of concealed.

I have said nothing so far about colouring gesso, for, of course, it is not left in its raw state. It takes oil colour most pleasantly, and here again "happy accident" comes to one's aid. Mr. Reginald Hallward gave me a good tip, and that is to put the colour on, and then wipe it partially off by passing a rag over the work, which will remove the colour in those parts in highest relief. The colour can be used fairly thinly, diluted with varnish and oil, and much may be done with transparent colours. The colouring of gesso is a much less exacting task than painting, as the work in relief plays such an important rôle in the finished result. Those who are not accomplished oil painters would delight in colouring a gesso panel. You should not wish to lose the crispness of the gesso, and it is obvious, therefore, that one must avoid painting thickly. At the outset the beginner should have a panel, and use it for experimental work, getting used to the medium first of all, and then he can try colouring it in various ways, and so learn the direction his efforts should take. Gilding is a help to gesso, and with a little practice the amateur can get sufficiently expert to be able to use gold leaf with much effect



for *touching up* and accenting parts of the design. This can afterwards be coloured with transparent colours, so that the gold shows through. This is a very different business to gilding a flat surface, which requires much practice to accomplish successfully. A few hints in gilding will be found in Chapter XIV.

As for the uses to which gesso can be put as a decorative agent, so many objects



No. 98.—Design for a Stool or a Coal-box, decorated with ornament suggested by Venetian work of the sixteenth century. The top and sides (showing how the front should be made to let down) are shown. Gilding could be introduced with considerable effect.

suggest themselves that I had better devote a little space to this subject, and it will also afford me an opportunity of saying something about the illustrations I have drawn to accompany these notes. Let me repeat here, what I have

had occasion to say in former chapters, that these illustrations must be looked upon as pictorial notes or practical diagrams, for they in no sense represent the effect of gesso. This can only be seen in the figure panels, which were photographed from actual work.

No. 94 is a small Cabinet, the front of which might be made to let down to serve as a writing slope, while the inside could be fitted with divisions for papers, etc. The decoration is a free treatment of foliage somewhat highly ornamentalised, no particular reference to any one plant being made. The main stems are developed into an important feature, and should be first considered, as they are the skeleton which is clothed by the leaves and flowers. This design might be worked on the plain wood if it were oak or other choice wood, or it can be wrought on pine and the whole coloured white, and then the design tinted in colours used transparently. Some of the leaves might be left flat and others only just touched with gesso ; others, again, could be brought up into higher relief. The gesso, in fact, should play over the design and not be used the same thickness everywhere.

The Italians, in the sixteenth century, used gesso largely in the decoration of furniture, and coffers and linen chests were among the articles so decorated. I give a sketch in No. 95 of a Coffin, the panels and lid of which can be decorated in gesso, and in No. 96 three of the panels are shown on a larger scale, so that the reader may see clearly the details. A certain uniformity of arrangement should run through the panels, as they are seen side by side, and so form one work, and to that end I have arranged the main stem somewhat ornamentally in the apple and pear panels.

The birds I have introduced are not transcripts of nature, but are slightly ornamentalised too — made “quaint” looking, as it would be out of keeping with the general scheme to introduce birds treated quite naturally amid such conventionalised surroundings. The middle panel is of a yet more ornamental character, so as to act as a foil to those on either side. I had some sort of lily in my mind when I drew this, and even the ornamental base was suggested by a lily bulb, but the object was to design something in harmony with, and yet in contrast to, the foliage panels, for variety or contrast is essential in any well-planned scheme of decoration.



No. 99.—Panel founded upon the Sun-flower, with quaint bird.

In designing the apple and pear panels nature is only made subservient to the decorator's wishes. A stem, for instance, *might* be twisted into any shape, and one does

not tell an untruth by twisting them as I have done: for the growth of the leaves and fruit nature has been strictly adhered to, though very much simplified. In colouring the panels rely upon the gesso for much of the effect, and that dodge of wiping off the colour ought to give a good result. The backgrounds could be floated on in transparent blues, getting it lighter towards the bottom, unless a good wood such as oak be used, and then even the oak could be



No. 100.—Continuous Scroll Design, suitable for decoration of a frieze or frame, suggested by Italian cinque-cento work.

stained. The colouring must not be thought of as painting from nature, but tinting in an agreeable manner reliefs, and therefore to plan a good harmonious scheme of colour is most essential.

A Diaper like that suggested in No. 97 could be made effective in gesso. The moths need not be raised all over, but the gesso could be used to emphasise them. Thus a sort of outline might be put around the insects, and the

ornamentation of the wings could be suggested by the gesso, as also the ornament on the background. I see no



No. 101.—An all over Repeating Diaper Design, founded on the Japanese rose (*Rosa rugosa*). Certain features, such as the bracts at base of flower and leaf-stalks and calyx, are ornamentally developed.

reason why stencilling should not be resorted to in such a design. Gesso would stencil in a blobby manner, which

would yield some happy accidental effects when coloured. The moths could easily be treated as stencils by cutting the four wings separately; see Chapter XII.

The ornamentation on the Stool or Coal-box, No. 98, was suggested by some Venetian furniture of the sixteenth century in South Kensington Museum. The actual making of the article need not be costly, as its art value could be made to depend upon the decoration. The idea was to make a combination stool and coal-box—the *utile* with the *dulci*. The colouring here could be in tones of brown and yellow, helped out with gilding. A study of sixteenth century decorated furniture would here be helpful.

The Panel of sunflower, No. 99, is conceived in much the same spirit as the panels in No. 96. The foliage is arranged to suit the shape decorated, and that is about all the conditions observed, except that very little foreshortening (or drawing in perspective) is attempted. This "flat" way of treating nature is not necessarily good decoration, as some think, but to draw in perspective, and still more to paint a foreshortened form, is much more difficult than to treat the same flat. It is, therefore, better to attempt too little and succeed than be over-ambitious and fail. Gesso can be very helpful here, as these forms nearer the eye can be actually in relief, and the modelling can be effected by the gesso instead of by elaborate painting. The background could be gold, or floated in with transparent colours, such as blues and greens, to give a deep peacock blue, mixed with varnish. The bird can be in tones of blue, and the leaves in pale quiet greens; but it is better to keep well within one's capacity, and not to attempt too much. Where

any good wood is used, of course this should be valued and left, only the decoration being coloured.



No. 102.—The Dancing Panel Frieze.  
Designed by Stephen Webb, for Messrs. Jeffrey & Co.

Man will always go back to the past for ideas. What was done a century ago "commands a respect and venera-

tion to which no modern work can pretend," and so we meet with quaint ships in decoration. I think the reason such *motifs* are used is that they strike us as so much more pleasing than the present make of such objects. The modern ironclad may be a good decorative *motif* in an age when man goes about in flying machines, or is shot through tubes, as are telegrams, but at present we prefer a galleon or a galley to a monitor or ram. The one in No. 9, Chapter II., is taken from a carved pulpit that was in a City church now destroyed, and is a contemporary portrait of a ship. Always go first-hand to the fountain-head of inspiration, and if you elect to use old *motifs*, do not work from some modern rendering of them, but turn back to contemporary examples.

The decoration of a frame in gesso is so obviously a capital way of employing one's time, that it might be thought I ought to have given more space to such objects, but it is so easy to adapt designs for the decoration of frames, that I thought it better to be as varied as possible in indicating the objects which might be decorated. The design, No. 100, comes under the head of "scroll-work," and for that reason is well fitted for displaying the qualities of gesso. The leaves can be just heightened with the gesso—accented as it were, rather than modelled in it. The berries in the fruits, again, can each be put in in gesso, while the "cup" can be more pronounced than the leaves which fill out the space, so as to give prominence to this feature in the design. Breadth of effect is obtained by giving prominence to some parts of the design, while other parts are "thrown away," or left. A design, therefore, which looks somewhat confused on paper, need not necessarily be so



when carried out full size, as we can simplify it by the way we reproduce it. This remark applies with particular force to the all-over repeating design founded upon the wild-rose, No. 101, which looks, I am afraid, owing to its reduction, very confused. But if the flowers and berries are wrought in high relief, and the stems and leaves little more than outlined or accented with gesso, this confusion would, I think, largely



No. 103.—Panel in fibrous plaster, before colouring. Executed for the Trocadero Restaurant by Messrs. Gerald Moira and F. Lynn Jenkins.

disappear. Here again nature is merely adapted, and certain features, such as the bracts at base of leaves and flower-stalks, dwelt upon and developed ornamentally. In carrying out a design which has to be repeated many times, stencilling might be employed, together with work by hand. The leaves, flowers and berries might be stencilled, while the stems and other details could be painted on.

The two figure-panels, No. 93, are reproductions of three panels in a pulpit in Teddington Church, designed and executed by Mr. Reginald Hallward.

The material used by moulders for the decoration of picture frames is made of whiting soaked in very diluted glue, gelatine, boiled linseed oil, and resin. To save the trouble of making it, most frame-makers would sell a would-be worker some of the composition. It must be used while moist, as nothing can be done with it when it dries. Fine mortar, plaster of Paris, and diluted glue is another composition used.

The Panels, Nos. 92 and 103, are by Messrs. Moira and Jenkins, and are portions of those executed for the decoration of the Trocadero restaurant. The original is wrought in fibrous plaster, Mr. Gerald Moira being responsible for the cartoon and colouring and Mr. Lynn Jenkins for the modelling. Works on a large scale could not be wrought in gesso, and so Mr. Jenkins models the design in clay, which is then cast in fibrous plaster. This material is plaster of Paris mixed with some fibrous substance such as tow, so that the weight is far less than solid plaster, and is, therefore, much easier to fix in position. The plaster is afterwards treated with size and varnish to take away its porousness; it is then in a capital state to receive colour, having a kind of ivory surface which is choice in itself, apart from the colour applied to it. This ivory surface of the plaster gives a quality to the colour which would be wanting were it on canvas, and it takes, therefore, far less time to colour a plaster panel than to paint one, and even were it as good it would be lacking in the sculpturalness of the work in relief. The same holds good of gesso

and this makes the colouring of it not so exacting a task as painting in oils. The work of Messrs. Moira and Jenkins is quite on their own lines as the sculptor and painter work in unison, and the "blend" is quite delightful. The decoration of the P. and O. building in the late Paris Exhibition was carried out by these craftsmen.

The effect of a panel before it is painted is seen in No. 103. Casting is an operation requiring much training and practice, and sculptors usually employ a professional caster to do their work. Of course, having once got a mould, any number of castings can be taken, and where a design has to be repeated this is an advantage.

Mr. Anning Bell is another artist who has won a reputation for his work in relief, both in plaster and gesso.

Miss E. M. Rope's panel, No. 49, Chapter IV., might have been wrought in gesso. It shows what effect can be obtained in low relief without the help of colour. Such a design would come, perhaps, better in plaster than gesso, as the plaster can be tooled and worked up much more easily than can gesso, which is harder and closer in grain. Ordinary plaster of Paris colours well, and Mr. George Frampton has executed some work most satisfactorily in this material. Transparent colours floated on very thinly being employed to colour the plaster.

Such a design as that of Mr. Stephen Webb's, No. 117, on the other hand, is eminently suited to gesso, having that sort of "blobby" quality I have before spoken about.

## CHAPTER IX.

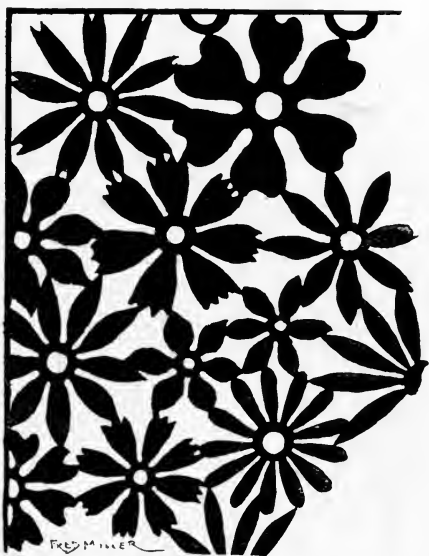
### FRETWORK: ITS POSSIBILITIES AND DEVELOPMENTS.



THE exceedingly jejune and trivial character of the Fretwork designs offered by the firms who cater for amateurs, will doubtless induce many readers to exclaim "there are no possibilities in fretwork, and it is only fit for schoolboys." On the lines of the ordinary photo-frame, pipe-rack, and other "fancy" articles of fretwork there certainly appear to be small possibilities in the craft, but this is not necessarily the fault of fretwork itself. Let us see what really are its possibilities; to what various uses it can be put in the hands of a craftsman.

A fret is a form produced by wearing away, or cutting away, some portions of the material so as to leave other portions in relief. The parts removed are usually cut away by a band-saw stretched in a frame to keep it perfectly taut, that is worked either with the hand or fixed in a machine, which, by means of a treadle, is made to work up and down with considerable rapidity. The saw being very narrow, the most intricate shapes may be cut out with ease, and to reach many of the spaces to be cut away, it is necessary to start by

gimbleting a hole through which the saw can be passed. The saw, therefore, must be readily adjustable, so that the upper end may be passed through the hole to enable it to reach those spaces shut in, as it were, and which cannot otherwise be got at. A very familiar form of fretwork are the old piano-fronts, which consist of elaborate geometrical designs, but in the newer and better pianos they are now seldom, if ever seen. The pattern was entirely produced by the portions cut away, though occasionally the oval centre had a moulding glued on to it to bring it forward.

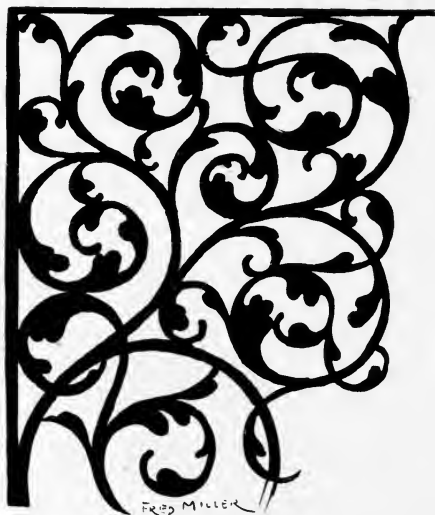


No. 104.—Diaper of various shaped Flowers slightly conventionalised.

Such works as these may be termed pure frets, and though I do not see why fretwork cannot be considerably modified and developed, as I shall hope to show later on, much may be done, and great variety of design may be obtained, by *merely* cutting away those portions not required.

What one feels about so many fretwork designs in the

market is their commonplace uninterestingness. They are either geometrically dull like the piano-fronts, or characterless like the photo-frames. The geometrical designs were admirably adapted, technically, to the requirements of the craft, but they showed no invention or freshness of idea. In the designs I have made to illustrate these notes (and which



No. 105.—Scroll Diaper which may be continued to fit any space.

I am, therefore, perforce obliged to allude to), I have endeavoured to get away, so far as my *ego* will allow, from the stock designs, and though my readers may not care to attempt any of them, they may set them thinking and impulse them to efforts in a somewhat newer direction. And this is, after all, the most useful

service designs drawn by another hand can perform for any craftsman. The good one receives by going to a museum is not to copy what is there, but to get an impulse in a new direction, to have one's mind started on a fresh track ; and it is in this spirit that I offer my own efforts to the reader. To call all or any of them original would be

to claim too much. I am influenced by what I find around me just as I hope those I address are, and if one really tries



No. 106.—Design for Over-Door.

to put oneself into what one does, to tinge what one attempts with one's personality, one is original to the extent of the *ego* with which one hall-marks one's work.

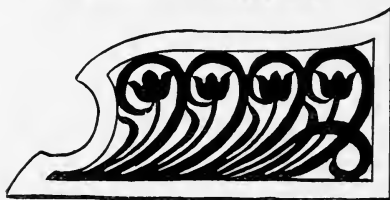
A glance at a piece of fretwork tells you that the design is largely conditioned by the craft. Great limitations are put



No. 107.—Design for Over-Window.

upon one, and therefore, in attempting original work, the method of reproduction must not for a moment be lost sight

of. Take the flower diaper, No. 104. Here we have a simple fret consisting of forms suggested by flowers just touching each other, for the more we "tie" the design together, the less liability is there to breakage. Small



No. 108.—Design for Chair-back and Arm.

isolated forms are very easily snapped off, even in the cutting, but we protect them by making all projecting portions touch each other wherever possible. The endless varieties of flower-forms could make such a fret-diaper very varied and would be a good exercise in ingenuity. I started making a companion design of leaves of various shapes, but this idea I will leave to those of my readers to work out who are so disposed.

One can be geometrical in feeling without being conventionally so, and the scroll design, No. 105, which could be continued *ad lib.*, is an illustration of this. If one were filling



a definite space with such a pattern, it would be advisable first to arrange the chief scrolls, and then, when these were placed agreeably, add the details, for constructive lines are always the first consideration in planning a pattern.

The idea of the over-window and over-door, Nos. 106 and 107, was suggested by two I saw in the house of a friend who had them cut out to her own design.

So effective were they (the design in my friend's case was Oriental in character) that I cannot do better than pass the idea on to my readers. The over-door can

have a shelf at the top, with an edge as I have suggested upon which may be placed old china, while below and inside the fret a curtain may be hung. Unless

the door opens the reverse way, the fretwork must not come too low so as to interfere with the opening of the door.

The tulip suggested the design. In the position an over-door would occupy a bold design is essential, as a "small" finicking one would be quite out of keeping at such a height from the ground.

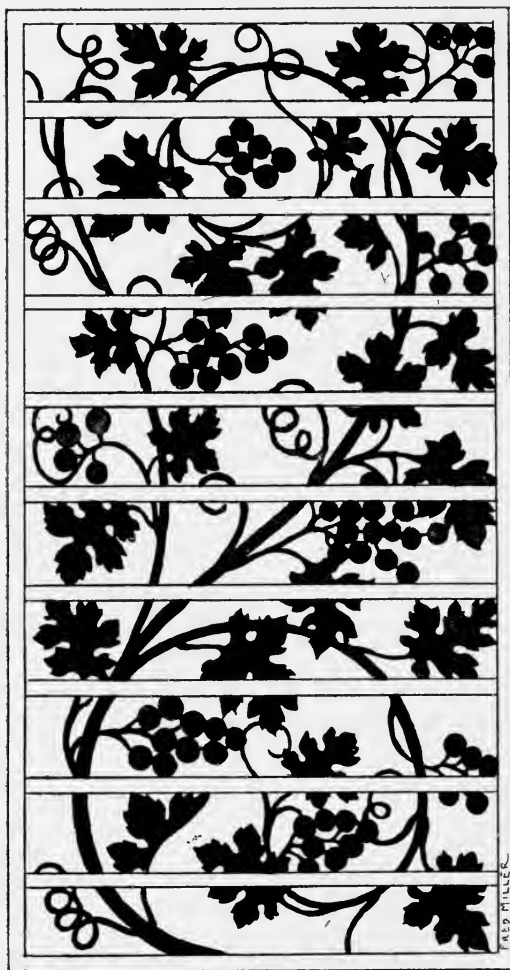
Eastern diapers, by the way, would be well worth studying in connection with

fretwork. Much "occidental" decoration is in the nature of a fret glued on to a ground, the fret afterwards being coloured and gilded.

The chairback, No. 108 was suggested by one exhibited some ten years ago by "The Century Guild," at the Inventories Exhibition, designed, I believe, by Mr.



No. 109.—Geometrical fillings adapted from Celtic designs.



No. 110.—Design founded on the Grape. The uprights could form a sort of grille and be independent of the fret, or glued at the back of the fret to strengthen it.

McMurdo. It struck me on turning over an article I wrote for the *Builder* at the time, that chairbacks are a capital use to which fretwork may be put. Each one might be different in detail; and yet, with certain general traits, so as to give the appearance of oneness when the chairs are seen together. The design may almost be considered pure ornament, though a lily was in my mind when I drew it. The arm is an addition of my own, but I think it would look very effective. It would be necessary to have chairs made specially, but if you find out a chairmaker to the trade, you can get a good plain chair made at a very reasonable price.

The two geometrical fillings, No. 109, are taken from Keltic crosses, casts of which are in South Kensington Museum. These early designers evinced a great love of, and considerable ingenuity in evolving the most intricate "strap" work patterns. I have shown where the "straps" go over and under, and it would greatly add to the effect of such a fret to slightly lower, with a flat chisel, the straps passing under. This would involve no difficulty which a little practice could not overcome and it would be developing fretwork in a perfectly legitimate way. If these two designs be cut as simple frets much of the effect will be lost, as the "under and over" nature of these Keltic designs is their distinctive feature. It would be a good exercise in ingenuity to try and evolve fresh combinations in this direction.

It is sometimes necessary to use the same plants again and again in design. The grape in No. 110 is a case in point. It is a plant which fulfils all a designer's requirements, and will continue to be employed for decorative purposes as much in the future as it has been in the past. The trellis



No. 111.—Symmetrical design founded on the wild Rose. The left hand half shows where a little carving could be put.

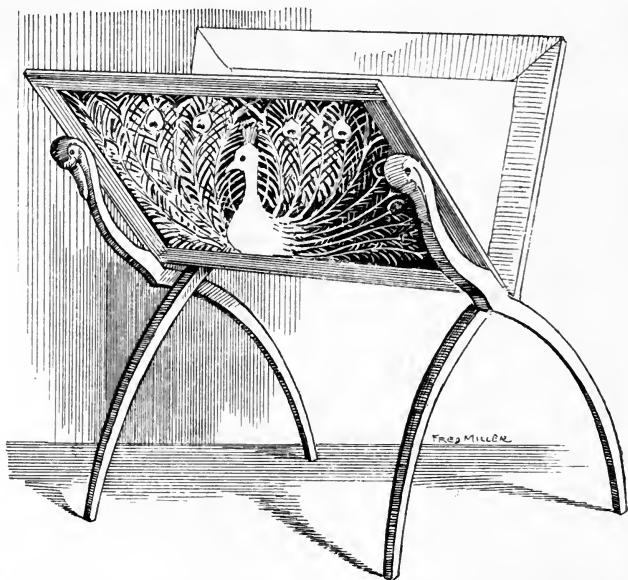
work gives character as well as supports the designs, and to show more distinctly the floral portion I have left the trellis white. At an artist friend's house I saw the top portion of a recess which he had filled with shelves, occupied with upright lattices, forming a receptacle for canvasses and other artist's clutter. It occurred to me that to add a fret



No. 112.—Design for sides of Portfolio suggested by the Peacock.

to these lattices would be a very attractive feature in a room. The grape portion might be cut out of pine, and then the lattices, say of mahogany, might be glued on to the back or front, or if the design be cut out all in one piece, then I see no reason why the grape portion should not be stained, the leaves in green, the stems in brown, and grapes in purple.

Transparent oil-colours, such as Prussian blue, raw sienna, burnt sienna, Vandyke brown, gamboge, vermilion and madder brown, thinned down with turpentine, would do, or you can get liquid stains. Such a design as this grape one should be carried out fully natural size, above rather than



¶ No. 113.—Design for opening and closing Portfolio Stand with fretwork sides, the detail of which is seen in No. 112.

below it. It would be enough merely to colour the bars, leaving the design plain.

A portfolio stand might be composed of two fret-cut sides, and such a design as the wild rose, No. 111, would be suitable. The stem, as will be noticed, is made a distinct

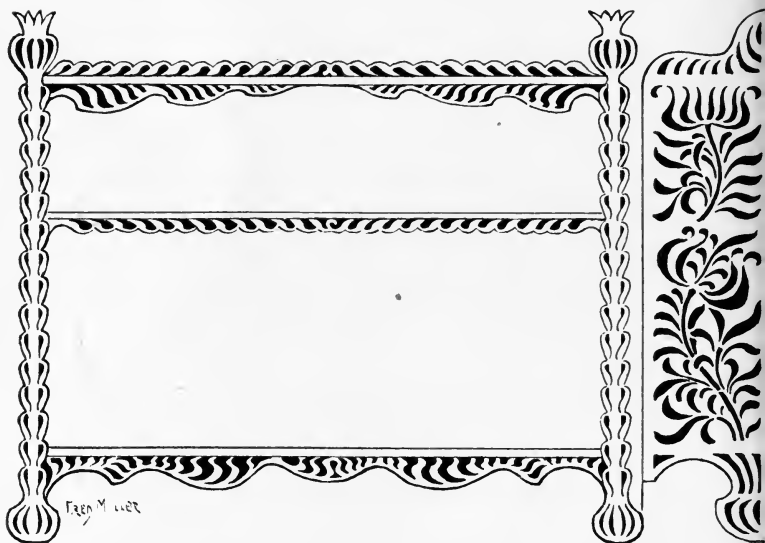
feature, and was the first consideration in making the design as it was in the vine, the flowers and leaves being to a great extent after considerations, or at all events dependent upon the disposition of the stems. The design is symmetrical, which emphasises the ornamental character given to it by the stems. On one side I have shown how the effect can be helped by veining the leaves, etc., but this veining must be kept very simple; one down the centre of each leaf would be enough. The disposition to become too naturalesque should be checked, as the ornamental character inseparable from fretwork should be preserved, nay developed, wherever possible, rather than lessened.

In No. 112 I have



No. 114.—Panel based on Sunflower. The white lines show where a carver's gouge could be used with advantage.

shown what I consider the most original design I have here attempted. It is based on the peacock, and it occurs to me that some very effective designs might be wrought on these lines. A design for the stand for the portfolio is also given in No. 113.



No. 115.—Cabinet ornamented with frets laid on. In the ends the design is produced by what is cut away.

A picturesque fire-screen might be made by hinging together three or four fretwork panels. A fillet might be screwed on to the margin, to take a sheet or sheets of glass, so as to check the heat. I have suggested, in Fig. 114, a panel based on the sunflower. Here again the lattice work is introduced to give strength and character to the design.



In sketching the design this should be indicated before the floral part is finally decided upon, so that the forms may be worked in effectively with the lattice. A reference to No. 111 will show that the grape design (as well as the sunflower), is influenced by the lattice work, and if in making the design you simply put the lattice in arbitrarily, after the floral part is drawn, some parts of it will be cut off in a clumsy fashion. In the panel of sunflower, I have indicated the veining of the leaves and the details of the flowers, which can be done by a carver's tool. Here again the floral part might be stained, or the lattice got out of a different wood and put at the back of the fretwork.



No. 116.—Bird in Fretwork. The white lines are given by a gouge, but they can be omitted.

There is no reason why some amount of carving should not be done to fretwork. Many of the carved screens, such as that in Trinity College, Oxford, are fret-cut as well as carved. The Japanese introduce carved fretwork into their cabinets, and very effective and dainty it is. It would help the fret cutter in original work to study some of these carved frets from Japan, and also some of their books of design, which are procurable at art booksellers like Batsford's in Holborn.

The carved fret could be glued down on to a panel of a cabinet. It need not masquerade as a piece of pure carving, but could be frankly shown to be what it is—a fret laid down upon a panel. I would even recommend the fretwork being cut out, say of light or white wood, and laid down on a dark one.

Another use to which frets may be put is the ornamen-



No. 117.—Fish panel, with background of ornamental water. The markings on the fish are given with a carving tool.

tation of a cabinet, as I have shown in No. 115. The shelves are got out in the usual way and the cabinet put together; though, of course, the two sides must be fret-cut before the article is fixed up. In the side indicated the pattern is formed, as will be seen, by the *portions cut away*, whereas, in most other cases, it is by the *portion left* that the design is produced. The Japanese frequently adopt this plan of cutting out the design itself, and it would be good



No. 118.—Portion of a pierced and carved doorway in South Kensington Museum.

practice to make positives of some design, say the rose or grape, and see how they would come if cut out instead of being left as *negatives*.

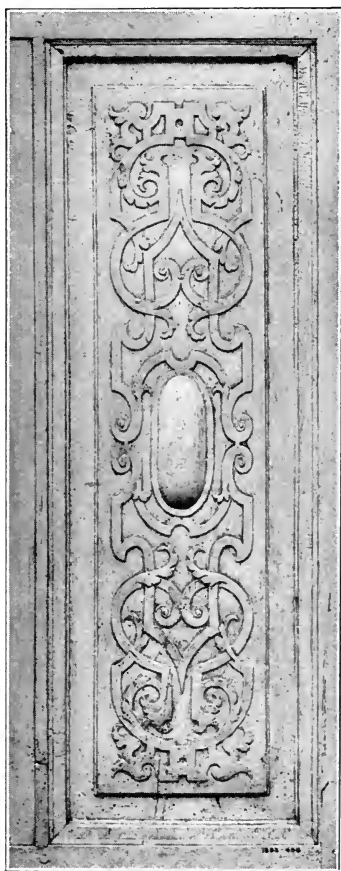
To return to the cabinet. The frets are got out of, say,  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch wood, and then glued on to the edges of the shelves and sides. It seems to me that a very good effect might be obtained by such a treatment as that indicated in sketch. One should always try to employ one's labour to some effective end, and that is why I endeavour to indicate to what uses fretwork can be put; pipe-racks and photo-frames are two of the poorest uses to which the craft can be applied and do little to encourage the craftsman to put out his full strength. So much work amateurs engage in is directed to such poor purposes that the work itself ceases to interest. In one of George Eliot's novels (*Felix Holt*, I think), ladies' fancy work is described as innumerable stitches taken to produce what neither the worker nor anyone else wants, and this remark would apply with equal force to much male handiwork. My impression is—a conclusion forced upon me during the preparation of this work—that there are many more possibilities in fretwork than most of us dream of, and that it only needs thought for the craft to be capable of considerable development.

Animal forms can be rendered in fretwork if treated as silhouettes. The Japanese cut out flying birds very effectively, but space prevents my giving any original examples of this form of fret. In No. 116 the bird itself is left and the background is formed of ornamental tracery. The details of the bird's plumage can be engraved as I have indicated, but in order that the fret itself shall be effective, such an attitude should be chosen as displays as much of the bird's

form as possible. A reference to Japanese designs will be very helpful, as their treatment of birds is not only characteristic but highly ornamental.

In the fish panel, No. 117, the details of the form certainly require engraving, for the mere silhouette of the fish is not as interesting as the bird, and needs, therefore, assisting with carving. The background is an ornamental rendering of water.

I spoke just now of carving as applied to fretwork, and I cannot better illustrate the subject (No. 118) than by reproducing a small portion of a carved and pierced doorway of Norwegian workmanship, a cast of which is in South Kensington Museum. The effect of this old work is intricate, but exceedingly rich, and, without slavishly copying it, some good



No. 119.—Door Panels, in South Kensington Museum, of French “strap” work of the sixteenth century.

suggestions may be derived from a study of it. The fantastic creatures wrought into the ornamental foliage add great interest to the work. In some of the Keltic crosses may be seen snake-like creatures most ingeniously entwined, and wrought with the ornament, of which they form an integral part. Chinese dragons and heraldic beasts could be adapted for fretwork. In this Norwegian doorway there is a fertility of resource which evinces great decorative skill. A mirror frame treated on these lines would be effective.

The example No. 119 I have given is one of four door panels, a cast of which is in South Kensington museum. It is an excellent example of "strap work" carving, but much of the effect could be obtained by fret-cutting with carving added. Door panels would look well ornamented in this way with frets glued on to them, suggested by this stout work.

The block was made from a photograph of the whole of the door, one of a series sold in the museum.

It is hardly necessary to say that many other designs in this work, besides those given in this chapter, could easily be adapted for fret-cutting.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE WORK OF THE NEEDLE AND DESIGNING FOR SAME.



NEEDLEWORK is a term of wide application, and it is only one aspect of the craft that can be touched on here, that being the designing and adaptation of designs to suit reproduction by the needle. I am perforce obliged to illustrate the subject chiefly with my own drawings, and though this may be a disadvantage in one way, it has this gain, that I can better illustrate my meaning than could any other designer.

The fault of so much needlework is that it is over-pretty and lacking character or distinction. One piece is so like another that one's attention is very rarely arrested. In the Paris Exhibition this last year I found the most characteristic work in the exhibits of the lesser-known countries, such as Finland, Lapland, and the Balkan States. The exhibits from the well-known European countries, including our own, are just what we expect to find, and what is so refreshing is to see that which comes as a surprise: it is like a new dish to the gourmet, and gives one a thrill of delight.

I rank needlework very high among the arts that adorn everyday life. It can be so beautiful in colour, and it can hardly help being delightful as work. The quality obtained by stitching coloured threads upon a woven fabric is most



No. 120.—Example of Embroidery modelled on an old work.  
(Chiswick School of Art and Handicrafts.)

pleasing to the senses, and as dyed wools and silks yield a rich, soft and varied palette, there is no excuse for needlework to be other than a pleasing harmony, and it may be much more than this. Colour comes before design, for if



the best design ever made is badly coloured—harsh and inharmonious in scheme—it is of far less worth than a poor design in which colour plays its proper rôle. But there is no reason why design should not be wedded to fine colour.

Why is it that most old needlework, even the schoolgirl samplers which folk have lately taken to collect, is more pleasing than the work of to-day? Speaking off-hand, I should say that the older workers were wholly concerned in skilfully carrying out a design with their needle, and, having but a very limited knowledge



No. 121.—Back of Chasuble, 17th Century.  
A good border could be adapted from this example

of art in general, kept well within bounds, and did not fail by attempting too much: to show that they were clever needlewomen was enough for them.

Our knowledge is infinitely greater; we can draw better, possibly paint from nature, know much about plant form, and have many more appliances at command and many more resources in the way of wools, silks, and fabrics, and yet, equipped thus well, we too often produce a far less adequate result than the older needlewomen who worked so



No. 122.—Embroidered Linen Bedspread, repeating design.  
(Messrs. J. Harris & Sons.)

much more restrictedly. The fact is we are in danger of being buried in our materials. Where these are limited the worker's resources are developed, and her fancy and ingenuity are brought into play, and it is, after all, these mental qualities that give us the interesting work. One wants the imagination to be touched, and see in the work the individuality of the worker, and not the appearance of

having been wrought from a printed copy bought at some fancy shop. This was strikingly shown in the modern French Tapestries, exhibited at the late Exhibition, which are so skilfully wrought as to look like the paintings they reproduce. Yet a glance at the magnificent sixteenth-century work shown in the Spanish pavilion would show in every way much more beautiful works, and yet are far removed from the pictorial in the modern sense.

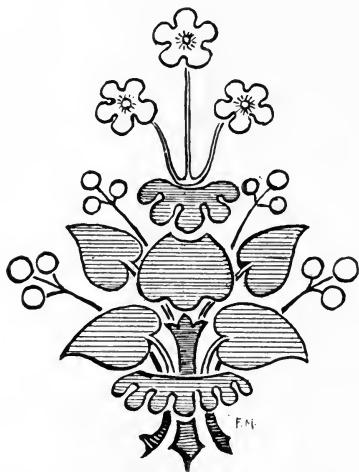
I have a coverlet, about a century old, worked in crewels on linen. The design is almost rude in its unsophistication, a wave-like series of scrolls doing duty for stems, from which grow, in a quite childish way, leaves, fruits and flowers



No. 123.—Border adapted from sixteenth-century German work.

that bear no resemblance to any individual plant. At the bottom is a rude representation of ground, with animals skipping over the hills, the animals about as well drawn as a child might do them. The colours of the crewels are all good, and though age may have mellowed them the harmony must always have been pleasant. This old piece of needlework is doubtless one of the counterpanes worked by our great-great-grandmothers, and is universally admired by those who see it, and if one analyses why this is so I think the answer is that it makes no pretence to be "school of art," but is simply a piece of needlework in nice-coloured

crewels. Its very archaicness, naïveté, like the art of primitive peoples, is a great charm, and in a self-conscious, analytical age any form of *unconsciousness* is refreshing.



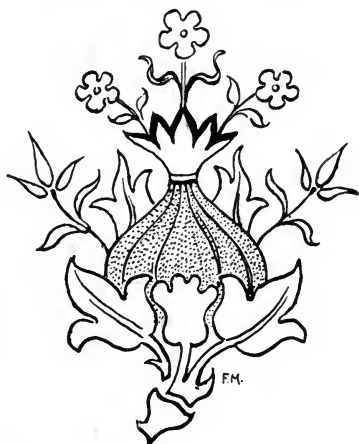
No. 124.—Conventional Sprig, from  
sixteenth-century work.

Some of these qualities are seen in the example No. 120, which appears to be a reproduction of an old piece of work. Here we have the archaicness I mentioned, and, looked at critically, it is very weak in design, the curves being very feeble and the whole panel wanting in logical coherence; yet I dare say many would prefer this example to those in which a much greater effort had been made to evolve a high-class design.

It will be gathered that I am an opponent of prettiness in the crafts, especially in that of the needle, for the stitches themselves, if cunningly done and with nice-coloured threads, will give us all the prettiness we need. We must think of those other qualities, character, individuality, naïveté, the adaptation of means to end. Such a work as the Chasuble, No. 121, possibly Sicilian work of the seventeenth century, is astonishingly rich in effect. It is a more or less traditional pattern, as some form of this decorated

scroll is constantly met with in the work of that period, and the rich and very varied colouring of the original is barely hinted at in the reproduction. The worker, in stitching the curious ornamental flowers and fruit growing on the wavy stem, would exhibit her skill in stitching and fancy in colouring them, for all the details being so removed from individual forms in nature, the worker would feel unfettered in colouring the design and her fancy would have rein, whereas had there been a more direct reference to nature the worker's individuality would have been brought much less into play, and this cramping would have been a serious handicap both to herself and her work.

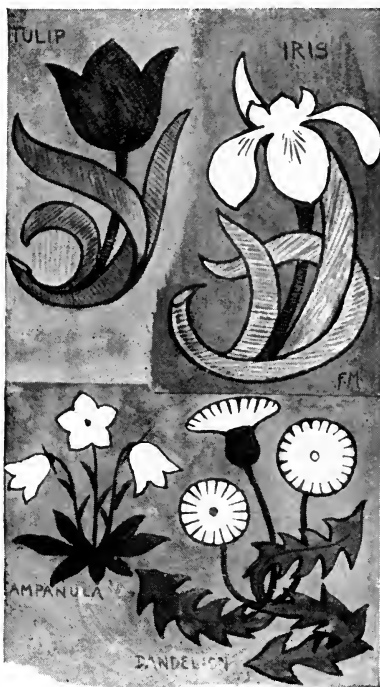
This brings us to the consideration of how far natural forms should be used in embroidery. Those who draw plant form much from nature are often disposed to use their studies too much as they find them in their note books. Having made a careful study of a plant there is the disposition to make immediate use of it in one's work. I am all for studying from nature, but I am at the same time all too well



No. 125.—Conventional Fruit, from sixteenth-century work.

aware from my own experiences as a designer, that one is apt to be far too naturalesque in one's work, and instead

of making a design, *drawing patterns*, one is only slightly modifying plant form. It is the ingenuity we display in using the suggestions received from a study of plant form



No. 126.—Simple appliqués, based on well-known flowers.

and the way we adapt what we have learned by sketching from nature that we show ourselves capable craftsmen.

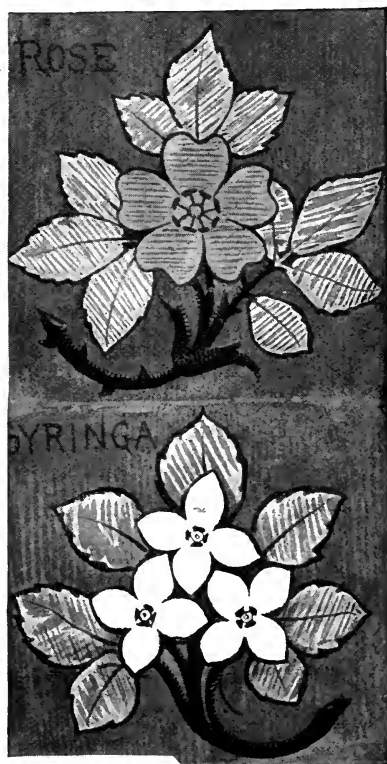
Here a study of old work is very beneficial as a corrective, but *not* to *imitate*. The reproduction of old examples is not the way to advance, and, moreover, there is a great chance of the reproduction being faithful in the letter, yet wanting in the spirit. William Morris, who made many designs for needlework, contrived to get a suggestion of nature with a

well-planned scheme of construction, plus a good deal of *ego*. He owed much to the past, for he used the woodcuts in *Gerarde's Herbal* rather than sketches direct from nature, because they suggested a certain quaint-

ness and singularity. The old woodcutter had simplified nature, and this saved Morris the trouble of so doing.

The border, No. 123, and the sprigs, Nos. 124 and 125, are all adaptations of German designs, and are given to show what excellent material is to one's hand in our museums, and also how one can get a suggestion of nature and yet be far removed indeed from being naturalistic.

The disposition to paint in stitches and imitate nature, even when fairly successful, is only a *tour de force*, and never can lead to any great success. Stitches bear no resemblance to the touches of a brush of colour. The



No. 127.—Conventional Sprigs for appliqué.

stitches are in themselves such an interesting as well as integral part of needlework that nothing should be done to take from them; on the contrary, we should work to

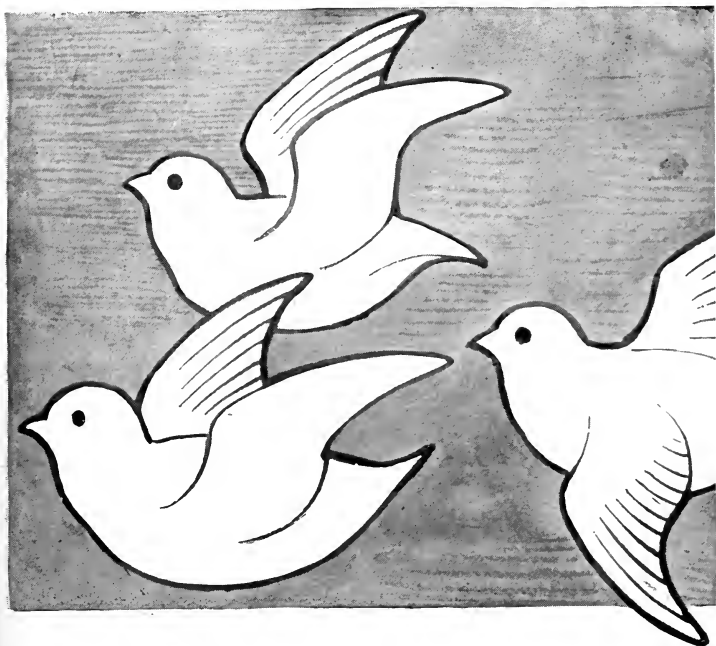


No. 128.—Animal Forms, adapted for being appliquéd.



display our command over our material and our hand-cunning, or else why employ stitches to effect what a touch of the brush does so much better?

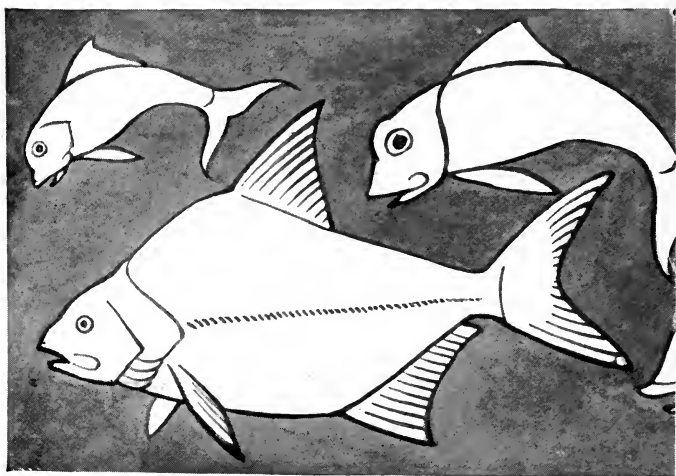
The design should always bear some ratio to the surface



No. 129.—Flying Birds, adapted for appliqué. The main forms only are suggested by stitching.

to be covered and the use to which the work is to be put. Where a curtain is generally seen in folds it would be inappropriate to work on it a design that would be spoilt by not being seen as a whole. I believe, too, in producing

the maximum of effect for the expenditure of time. Of course there is nothing against producing a highly wrought piece of needlework, and for certain purposes time need not be considered, though there is never any excuse for wasting it. There are more calls on our time, more things we want to do than was the case even half a century ago, and so to



No. 130.—Fish Forms, adapted for appliqué. All detail is avoided, only the essential forms being indicated.

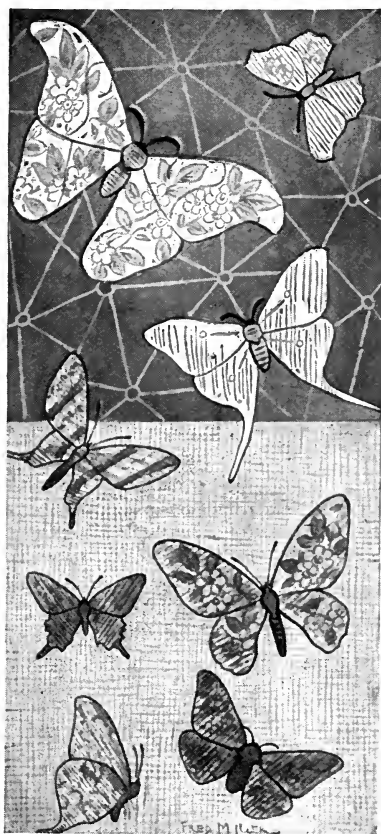
produce the best effect possible in the time is what the *Zeitgeist* dictates. Outline embroidery in coarse crewels on flannel or linen yields a very excellent effect for the time spent upon it. Here a well-planned design which agreeably covers the ground is very important. It must of necessity be a repeating design if the material is considerable in area,

and those not skilful enough to invent one for themselves might try adapting a wall-paper or cretonne design to suit their purpose ; but as it takes much longer to do a stitch than put on a touch of colour care must be taken to keep the design simple rather than elaborate. This will mean leaving out a good deal in the design you take to adapt.

The repeating design, No. 122, is of the wall-paper order, and covers the ground very pleasantly. The forms are highly ornamental, though we feel they are based on plant form.

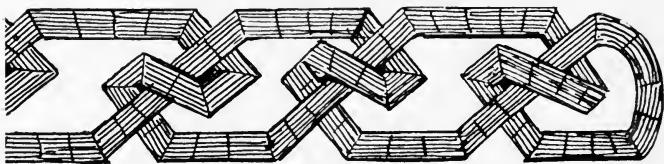
#### APPLIQUÉ.

I have an idea that appliqué is not sufficiently used in needlework in this country ; on the Continent it plays an all-important part in the craft. It is astonish-



No. 131.—Butterflies and Moths in appliqué. The materials used might be figured ones.

ingly effective for the time it takes, and there is a solidity and strength about it that adapts it for covering large surfaces at the smallest expenditure of time. Sprigs, animal or other forms "powdered" over hangings cut out of nice materials and appliquéd will give a most excellent effect, and far from cheap-looking. The needlework should play about the appliqués so that there is a union between the two. One way of covering wall-hangings would be to work the "plan," *i.e.*, the lines dividing the surface into spaces, and then appliquéd animal forms in the spaces. Such well-known plants as are adapted in Nos. 126 and 127 would make good appliqués

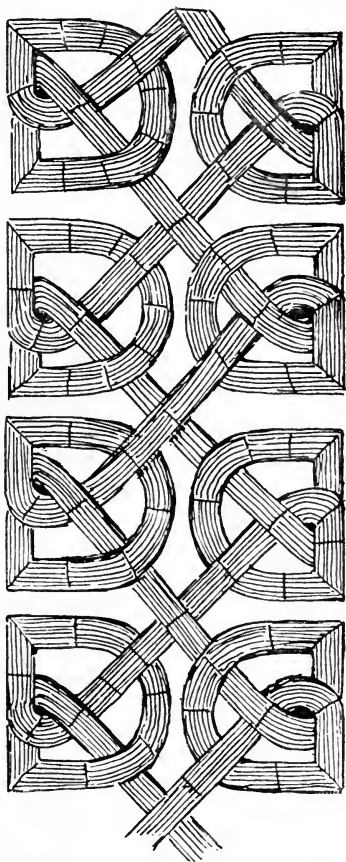


No. 132.—Interlaced Strip Border of Keltic design.

for powdering over a large surface, and there would be no necessity to do more than distribute such forms over the surface. Cutting forms for appliqués compels one to be severe and ornamental as one has the limitations of one's work forced upon one. The use of figured silks and damask patterns gives good results, and should be tried. Even the greens for leaves might be cut out of a silk damask.

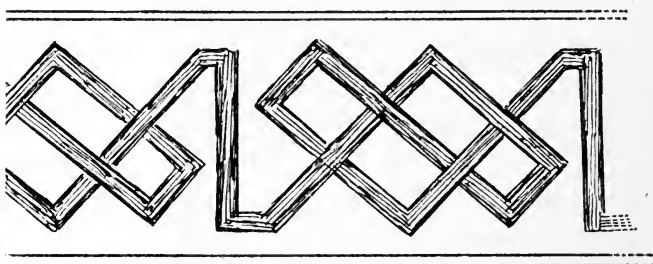
In a panel at the Paris Exhibition, exhibited in the Finnish Court, the background was composed of various coloured silks, so cut out as to give the effect of water, hills,

and sky. Upon this a tree, the mountain ash with berries, was appliquéd and worked, and the effect of the whole was both original and artistic. In a screen, too, at the Woman's Exhibition, worked by Frau Helen Reutsch, great originality was shown. The flower was the larkspur, or delphinium, no easy one to render, but by massing the racemes of flowers, and simplifying them so that they could be appliquéd in "lumps," the effect was striking. The appliqué followed the outline, but individual flowers were not worked, as it would only have produced a confused jumble. The leaves were appliquéd, and by having the background of different coloured blues going into greens, and working grasses over the leaves of the larkspur, the design lost and found itself in the most delightful fashion. All the resources of the



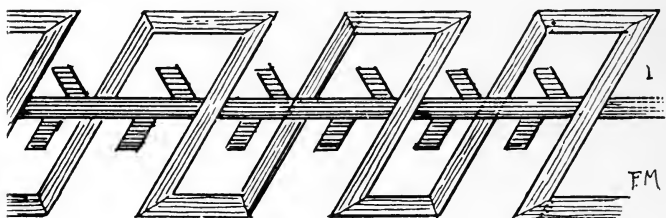
No. 133.—Interlacing Strip Work  
Border of Keltic design.

needleworker's art were called into play, and the result was as original as it was delightful. The cutting up of the background greatly helped the effect, as it gave a certain mystery to the whole which touched the imagination.



No. 134.—Interlacing Border, suggested by Keltic work.

It would seem that many workers keep too rigidly to one style of stitch instead of bringing all kinds of stitches and all sorts of devices into play. I have seen painting on the



No. 135.—Border suggested by Keltic work.

silk with dyes resorted to with considerable effect, and in the screen above mentioned dyes were used on the background towards the base. Painting on a woven fabric

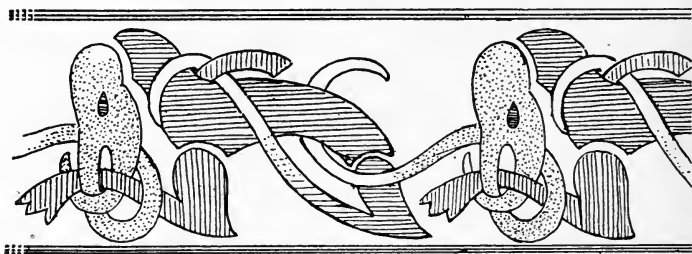
with dyes is much done in France, and was introduced into England some years ago, and with needlework



No. 136.—Screen in Silk showing use of appliqué.  
Designed by Herr Ubbelohde.

to support it can be made to yield the most excellent results.

Animal forms come well in appliqué, and in Nos. 128, 129 and 130 some suggestions are given. Do not be afraid of being too severe in designing such *motifs*, for appliqués are



No. 137.—Intwining Animal Grotesques. From the Durrow bible, 8th Century. Adapted for needlework.

much more effective when no attempt is made to lose sight of the fact that they are cut out and applied, than where an effort is made to lose the hard edge. All tendency to be naturalistic should be strenuously resisted.

The birds in No. 129 are rudimentary in drawing, and this is what you want to obtain in appliqués: all that is adventitious is left out and only those features common to the type retained. They are birds in the act of flight, and that is all that is said, but this *is* said unmistakably. Fish being naturally quaint in form lend themselves better than animals to this treatment, as may be seen in No. 130.

Insects can be very effectively used, especially if they are cut out of richly-coloured figured and dyed fabrics, as is suggested in No. 131. In the upper half of this design the appliqués are shown on a dark ground which might be worked with lines of silk as hinted at, suggestive of spiders' webs.

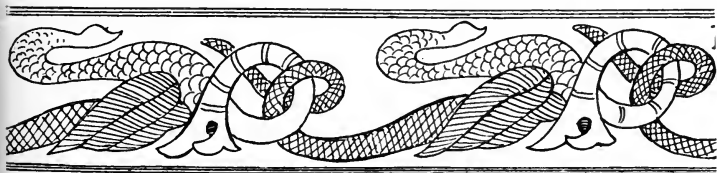


## KELTIC EMBROIDERY.

The extraordinary ingenuity displayed in the old Keltic designs makes them peculiarly suitable for needlework, and in some of the embroidery executed under the direction of the Donegal Industrial Fund excellent use was made of old designs, many of them to be found in the Durrow Bible of the eighth century. The notable feature in these Keltic patterns is the interlacing of a sort of strap-work, as shown in Nos. 132 and 133. These patterns look very effective worked in long stitches of flax crossed at intervals by threads at right angles. Golden-coloured flax on a dull red ground gives a fine harmony. Flax is more glossy than silk, and used in long parallel stitches produces a rich and brilliant effect, and varies in colour as the light plays over it.

Endless variations can be evolved on these lines, two of which are shown in Nos. 134 and 135.

Another form Keltic designs take is the interweaving of grotesques, examples of which are given in Nos. 137 and 138.

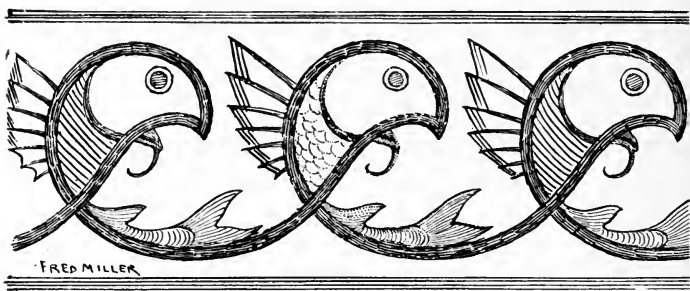


No. 138.—Intwining Grotesques, from the Durrow Bible, 8th Century.

We hardly find any parallel to such patterns in any other time or country, and they are so full of decorative suggestiveness, as well as being wonderfully ingenious in them-

selves, that all designers should give them heed. Worked on a large scale such borders as Nos. 137 and 138 are very effective. They could easily be adapted for appliqués.

Another class of needlework is that in which braiding is linked with stitching. The continuous fish border, No. 139, is an example, the scrolls and curves being given by braid, and the forms that turn the braiding into fish worked in stitches. It does not look particularly effective on paper, but then no needlework designs do; but such a pattern



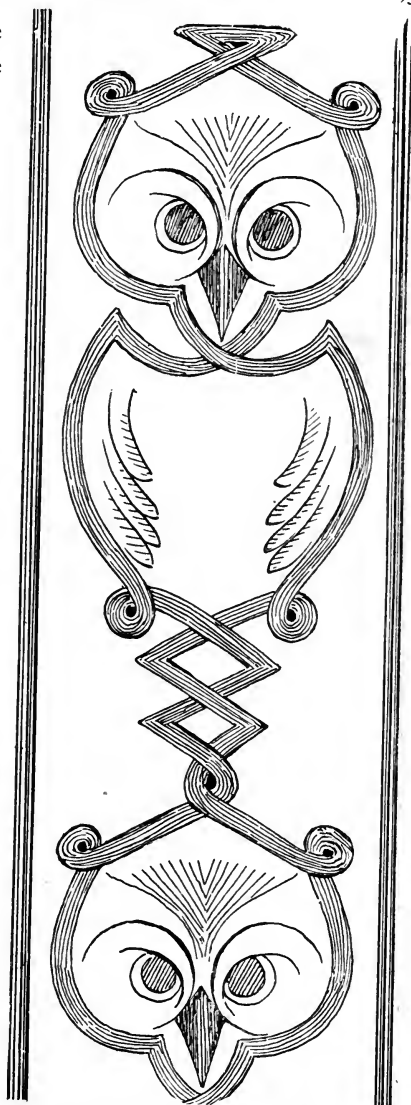
No. 139.—Highly Conventionalised Fish Border, for braiding and needlework or thread embroidery.

wrought in red and blue on canvas would be characteristic in effect. On linen it could be wrought in thread, and instead of braid dark blue stitches could be employed, while the rest of the design might be worked in bright red.

The owl border, No. 140, is similar in character, and could either be wrought in braiding and stitching or in red and blue thread on canvas or other material, or, if on frieze, in red and yellow flax.

Burne-Jones made many designs for figure subjects to be

wrought with the needle, and one frieze of considerable length, "The Romaunt of the Rose," worked by Mrs. Lothian Bell, is among the finest specimens of modern needlework I have seen. The scroll ornament and accessories were designed by William Morris. The whole of the fabric it was wrought on was covered with stitches, which gave the frieze a most beautiful quality, but the time occupied in executing it must have been very considerable. Still, with such a beautiful design to work, whatever time was spent upon it brought an ample return. Burne-Jones, having drawn so long for stained



No. 140.—Grotesque Owl Border, to be wrought in braiding and needlework, or red and blue thread on canvas.

glass, was peculiarly fitted for designing for needlework, for it is absurd to imitate pictures in embroidery. Figures must be drawn in a certain simple sculpturesque way to

adapt them for needlework, and the colouring must be kept somewhat flat as though seen in a full subdued light, for any strong effect of light and shade is not suitable to reproduction by the needle. Such paintings as those of Botticelli's would be more adapted for needlework than Rubens's or Rembrandt's for instance.



No. 141.—Needlework Panel.  
Designed by Mrs. Traquair.

The panel, No. 141, designed by Mrs. Traquair, recognises the limitations of the needlewoman's craft, and would work extremely well. I should say much of the background might be appliquéed with advantage. In such a panel as this all the resources of the craft might well be brought into play; full stitching, outline, appliqué, while silk, wool and flax should be employed in the working.

In this way, by allowing one to play into the other as well as by combining various textiles, for the appliquéed might be cut out of both plain and figured materials of both silk and wool, a very varied and subtle effect could

be obtained. The single figure subjects of Albert Moore's could be well adapted for reproduction by the needle.

In working a figure panel the flesh only need be wrought all over; the drapery and background could be kept more or less in outline, or the drapery could be an appliqué. A good deal, too, should be made of the outline, and in a face it would be enough to outline the features and keep the flesh tints flat, or almost so, for any attempt to imitate the play of colour easily obtainable in paint only shows how inadequate the needle is to produce such a result.

Another scheme would be to keep the figure in No. 141 in the material employed, say linen or worsted canvas, outlining all forms with a strong colour, say dark brown, working the hair fairly solid, while keeping the features in outline. The leopard skin could be worked, while much of the background should be appliquéd, and this arrangement would throw the figure into relief.

A second visit to the Paris Exhibition revealed to me that for boldness and originality of effect, and a certain workmanlike command of the materials, the Continent is before England. We are too petty, too "genteel" in our needlework. It wants a touch of the savage in it to relieve it of its suaviness and prettiness. The main lines should be more emphatic, more striking in arrangement, and the details simpler; but the subject is so vast that space prevents me touching further on it here, although I hope these few hints may not be without helpfulness to the strenuous worker with the needle.

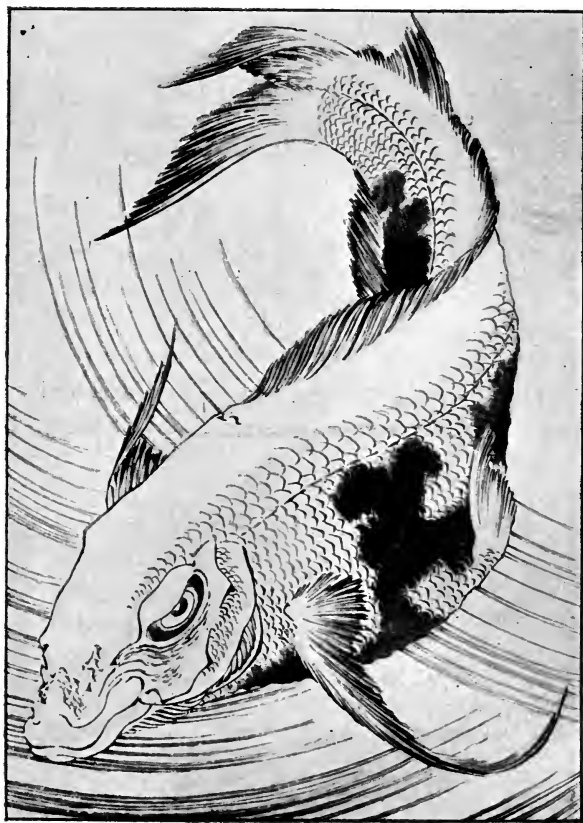
## CHAPTER XI.

### ANIMAL FORMS IN DECORATIVE ART.



RAFTSMEN of the Renaissance were fond of introducing the human form into their arabesque designs, and they were exceeding skilful in weaving their ornamental and figure *motifs* into patterns. It has always seemed to me that it is degrading nature's supreme handiwork to make a scroll or other pattern end in a human torso or head. This I allow is a question of individual taste, but without staying to argue the point we will pass on to consider the introduction of animal forms into designs, for here there can be no feeling of repugnance, as some of us have when the human form is made into an ornamental accessory. On the contrary, it adds variety and interest to decorative work to introduce animal forms, and it may be worth while to see how we can best use such forms in our work. I have chosen some admirable examples of Japanese drawings of fish, among other illustrations to this chapter, because this Eastern Art is a perfect mine of wealth to the decorative artist, upon which he can draw, and from which he can learn so much as to the adaptation and treatment of such *motifs* in his work.

The reason, it appears to me, that Japanese animal studies are so adapted to the requirements of the designer is that



No. 142.—From a Japanese Print, by Hokousai.

Japanese artists have studied in the school of nature with a loving, sympathetic intelligence, and have trained themselves

to see accurately, and record with unerring skill and precision what they see. They have mastered the shapes of the animals they delineate: they see them *as shapes* in fact; they draw from observation rather than knowledge, for it is a question whether they trouble about the anatomy of the creatures they draw, or bother about what is under the skin. The very precision with which they record their observations has developed this faculty of

making shapes of all things, and employing but little *Chiaroscuro*, the Japanese have become unerring draughtsmen.

Take, for instance, their flying birds: instantaneous photography has only proved how accurate the Japs are in rendering such actions, and we know this was entirely the re-



No. 143.—From a Japanese Print, by Janko.

sult of trained observation, for the most intimate knowledge of anatomy would not have taught them the set of the wing feathers in the act of flying. The appearance of great simplicity only comes from very thorough knowledge, which teaches one to leave out all that is non-essential, and so we find in the best Japanese work, No. 142 for instance, that the outline will do everything in revealing form and indicating movement. Only those who have essayed to draw animals



in movement from life can appreciate at its full value this sketch of a fish by the great Japanese artist Hokousai. The



No. 144.—A Barn Owl (by flash-light). By Cherry Kearton.  
From "With Nature and a Camera" (Cassell & Co., Ltd.).

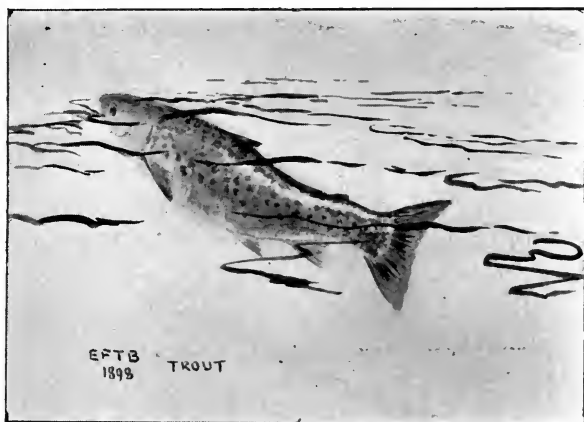
nervous outline, the verve of the curve of the body, the graphic waviness of the fins which indicate that the creature

is swimming, the large spaces left plain, and the concentration of the detail all stamp this drawing as masterly.

Or take No. 143 by Janko, which is an excellent specimen of brush work and could be rendered easily in stencilling. Every touch is in the right place; the placing of the dark and light spaces, how effective this is: decorative truly, but in the only sense that this very much abused word should be used. The word decorative with us is too often either a term of reproach or an excuse for insufficiency, for what is not good enough to be called pictorial can be made good enough to be thought decorative. Decorative should mean selection and adaptation: you select what to record and therefore what to leave out, and you secure, as in these two Japanese prints, what is essential, *vital* to the delineation of the subject, and you adapt your knowledge to the work in hand, so that if you were carving a fish in wood you would treat it in quite a different way to what you would if you were working it in crewels or painting it on glass.

Those who can spare time should sketch from life. The sketches you make may be poor enough, but the fact that you have deliberately stopped to observe a particular creature will teach you more about it than much looking at books, prints and photographs. Not that the latter are to be despised, for a characteristic photo, such as that of the Barn Owl by Cherry Kearton, whose book is a very useful one to the craftsman, affords excellent *raw* material. The difficulty comes in knowing what to seize upon and what to omit when you work from photographs, for if we compare this snapshot with a Japanese print we see that a good deal in the photograph depends upon light and shade, while in such a drawing as Hokousai's, No. 142, there is no light and

shade, the whole effect being obtained by pure drawing. I have spent much time in the Zoological Gardens, sketching, and the result of many a morning's work has seemed poor enough at the time, and yet one successful thumb-nail sketch, however slight it may be, has saved the day. It requires some practice to learn to sketch moving objects. I found that what one must train one's self to see is the shape



No. 145.—Trout Swimming. From a Study by E. F. T. Bennett.

of the creature, the shape depending, of course, upon the action in which you wish to draw it. If you begin to think of details you get nothing down, so bewildering is it, whereas by learning to take in the creature as a shape, then the head, feet, body, and other parts come in as part of the general shape, and you will, after a little practice, be able to seize upon what is essential and characteristic and make

very useful notes: you mentally snap-shot the animal in this way. Charcoal or crayon on brown paper with white chalk for the lights, I have found to be better for securing rapid sketches than pencil on white paper, as the former yields an effect so much more readily than the latter can.

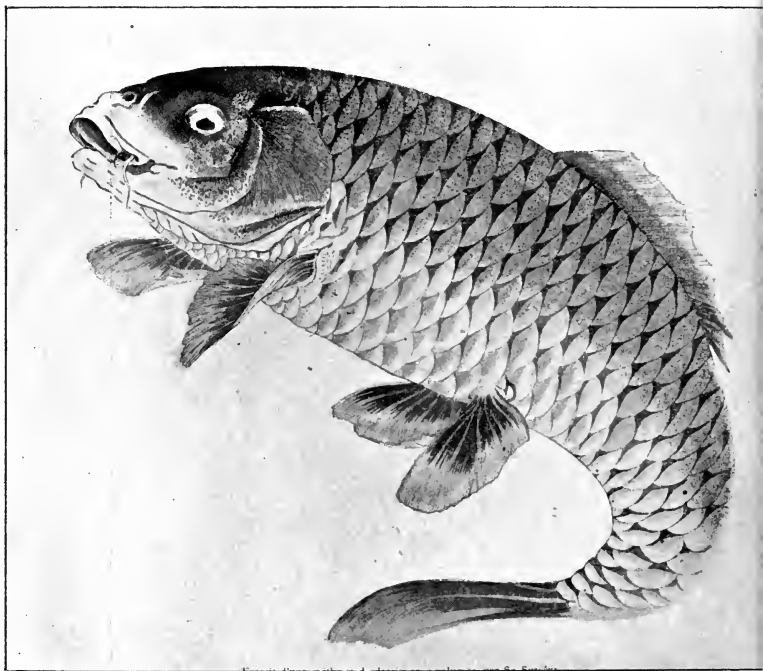
The student will find that if he has been used to sketching birds only he will feel quite strange when it comes to reptiles or fish. Each department of the animal kingdom requires learning, as it were, or rather requires the eye to become accustomed to what it has to take in. Fish are wonderfully ornamental, but are somewhat difficult to sketch when swimming about. My first experience of the kind was at an aquarium, and it was some time before I could get anything down on paper, so confusing was it to watch the fish ever on the move. I suppose I started to sketch before I had observed anything to record. However, after a couple of hours, I managed to bring away some useful data. Remember that for details or colour you can always go to stuffed specimens. What you want, therefore, in your sketches from nature, is to record movement, action and the light and shade necessary to reveal the main forms, and by thus limiting what you have to do, you simplify your work and bring it within reach of human endeavour.

Japanese work is so excellent because it springs from such intimate knowledge of the subject and is thus impressionistic in the highest sense. Their artists have almost learned nature by heart, at any rate they can repeat some of her forms from memory, yet in their best work their artists constantly refresh their minds by going direct to nature, and those who are familiar with a Japanese artist's sketches, direct from the objects delineated, are aware



No. 146.—A Sparrow Hawk—p. 220 in "Camera Craft," by  
Dr. R. W. Shufeldt.

that the outline can be made to do what we Westerns require light and shade to effect. The Japs work always in a full light, which shows the subject as a shape, while we,



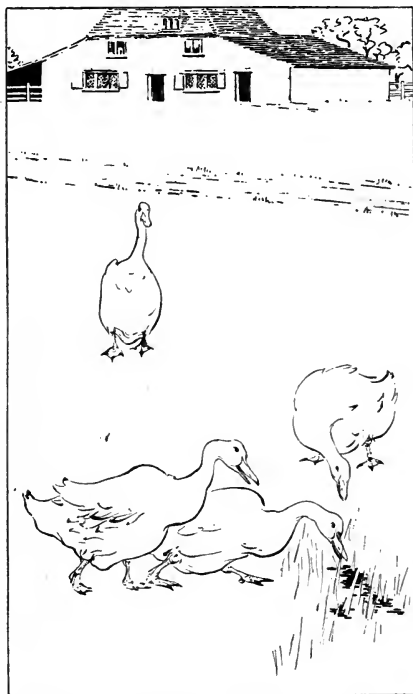
No. 147.—From a Japanese Print by So-Shiseki.

by working so much indoors, have grown to see objects more as arrangements of light and shade than as shapes.

The trout swimming, No. 145, is an accurately observed movement, and though by an Englishman is quite Japanese in its simplicity and restraint.

The reproduction of a photograph, No. 146, one of a series by Dr. R. W. Shufeldt, is so singularly like a Japanese painting, that I selected it partly for this reason, as it emphasises what I have elsewhere said of the accuracy of the Japs as observers. If realistic means truth to nature, then the Japs are severe realists, and yet many pass by their work with the implied sneer, "only decorative"!

The work known as the *One Hundred Birds* (it can be had in London in 3 vols., price 10s. net), is a perfect storehouse of material ; the original drawings are now shown at South



No. 148.—Domestic Fowl in Art, by Miss C. L. Allport. The birds in this panel show how much may be suggested by a few lines.

Kensington. This photo of Dr. Shufeldt's one would think had been inspired by one of these one hundred studies. If we glance through these drawings we are

struck by another quality, and that is their taste and judgment in placing their chief objects in a design. I mention this lest it might be thought that I ignored the artistic side of Japanese art, though this branch of the subject lies outside my present purpose, as something will be found on it in the chapter on decoration.

In using animal forms in any craft the appearance of being a natural history study should be most carefully avoided, and it is for that reason that I do not counsel the tyro to go to a natural history for his material, as it is very difficult to go to such a source without betraying it in one's work. So many drawings in natural histories are made to look pretty, but if we consider them critically we shall find them to be wanting in character; indeed, the characteristics of the animal are too often lost sight of.

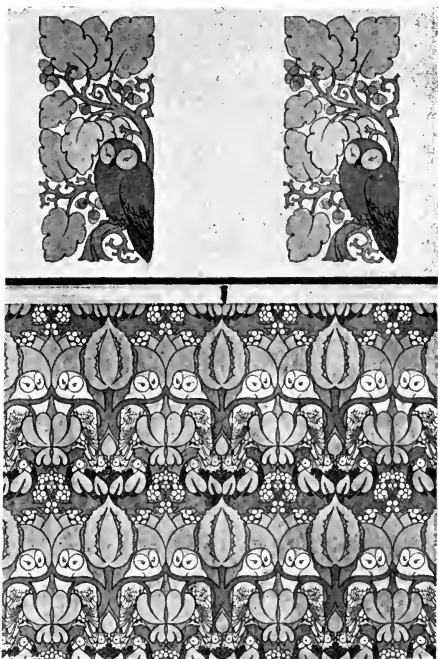
Turning once more to Japanese sources, we shall see that, taking Nos. 142 and 147 as a lesson, what is ornamental in the creature is dwelt upon and even emphasised, and in working from such studies a wood carver or decorator would have no difficulty in using such material, while he would find much more difficulty in adapting a drawing from a natural history. The decorative artist wants to dwell upon and develop all that is ornamental in the animal, to look for patterns, as it were, for in *repoussé*, carving, gesso, or any work in relief, the ornamental features can be made so much of, and if colour has to be left out, this patterning on the creature must, to a large extent, take its place. Developing, too, the quaint and eccentric aspect of animal life gives character to work; that is why such forms as the John Dory and gurnard in fish, the owl and laughing jackass among birds, the rabbit and



monkey among animals, are so often met with in decorative art, because of the natural quaintness of these creatures, or their adaptability to a craftsman's uses. A Japanese can use any object, and, by the way he renders it and selects what is best worth using, make it look in keeping with its environment; but I had better follow up what I have said in praise of this Eastern art by a word of warning. Do not attempt to imitate it; learn all you can from Japanese sources, but work on your own lines so far as may be.

It is a good plan to practise

drawing in outline and *deliberately* leave out all details. The drawing by C. L. Allport, No. 148, shows what can be done to render form with little else but the outline. This kind of rudimentary work shows how far one knows what one is doing,



No. 149.—The Owl. Designed by C. F. A. Voysey. An instance of how rudimentary a form may be in decoration. (Messrs. Essex & Co.)

for it is not difficult to hide one's shortcomings under a mass of detail, whereas, given in abstract as it were, what



No. 150.—Pomegranates and Cockatoo. Designed by Walter Crane. (Messrs. Jeffrey & Co.)

little there is has to be not far wrong, or it would be meaningless. Before introducing an animal form into a design it is a very excellent plan to make three or four sketches, leaving out as much as one can in each sketch until you get down to the elements, or bed rock. The owls in Mr. Voysey's design, No. 149, are elemental, and this sort of abstracting is a good test of one's decorative instincts, and is far from being the easy business it may appear to be to a cursory observer. This method of

decorative instincts, and is far from being the easy business it may appear to be to a cursory observer. This method of

making several sketches of the same subject simplifying each one by leaving out what can be spared, is said to be practised by Mr. Phil May, who can, as we all know, suggest with a few strokes what most of us require an infinite number to effect. This same faculty of selecting what is necessary and rejecting what can be dispensed with, is what a decorative artist should develope, and to this can be added the faculty of making patterns and shapes of all that comes within his purview.

Mr. Walter Crane's use of the cockatoo in No. 150 is less elemental, but is far removed from a natural history drawing, and shows treatment and selection, the blending of the wings, and the planning of the birds so that they present an ornamental shape in the scheme, fits them for their place in the wall-paper, though it is just a question whether forms so emphatic, and even naturalistic, bear the repetition that a wall-paper exacts. Mr. Voysey makes his owls much more part of the fabric of the design—the owls themselves, as we observed, are quite elemental—and the repetition as a result becomes less tiresome.

The illustrations teach one lesson, at any rate, and that is, that between the photographs from life, say No 144, and the owl adapted to a decorator's requirements, as in No. 149, there is pretty wide interval.

## CHAPTER XII.

### STENCILLING.

#### CUTTING AND DESIGNING.



**STENCILLING** is one of the most useful methods that can be employed to quickly ornament a flat surface, and as an amateur can soon both learn to cut and use a stencil, I will briefly give a few hints on both branches of the subject, which, taken in connection with the illustrations will, I trust, make the method clear.

A stencil plate is a perforated sheet of metal or paper, and to obtain an impression we have only to rub over the cut out portions with a stiff brush and colour, upon any flat surface we may lay the stencil. For all ordinary work, good thick drawing paper is the best material to cut, but I have used lead foil, and many stencils are cut out of zinc ; but these latter have to be cut by a professional cutter, so we will confine ourselves to paper. Draw your pattern on the paper, and then with a sharp-pointed knife cut through this cleanly and at one stroke of the knife, working upon a sheet of glass. The reason for cutting on glass is that the knife

slides over the glass and enables you to cut with one stroke, whereas if you cut on wood or cardboard the knife is apt to catch, which greatly adds to the difficulty of cutting. You can purchase at a good tool shop a blade coming to a point, fixed in a wooden handle, which is an excellent thing to cut with, but the small blade of a penknife will do provided you have an oilstone by you to keep it in condition, for in cutting curves and complicated patterns you want the knife to work easily and *at once*.

Having cut your pattern you need to give the paper two coats of "knotting." This is a kind of varnish used by house painters, and can be had at any good oil shop. Lay the stencil on a piece of brown paper and rub the knotting on with a flat hog-hair brush, seeing that every part of the stencil is covered. Then hang it up to dry in the sun, afterwards varnishing the other side. If the knotting runs through



No. 151.—  
Diagram  
showing  
how 'ties'  
have to  
be left in  
cutting  
such a  
letter.

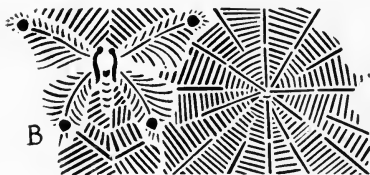


No. 152.—Simple Stencil Border, butterfly and sprig.

the cut portions brush the surplus over to distribute it. When the first coat is quite dry you can give it a second, as the first will be pretty well absorbed by the paper. The

knotting not only makes the paper waterproof, but also makes it tough.

So far for cutting a stencil. Now as to designing them.



No. 153.—Second Stencil Plate, for background and pattern on butterfly used in the two following designs.

In No. 152 we have a simple design, and if we examine it we see that the pattern is as much the result of the portions left uncut as it is of the cut ones. These uncut parts are called “ties” and are an integral part of all stencil

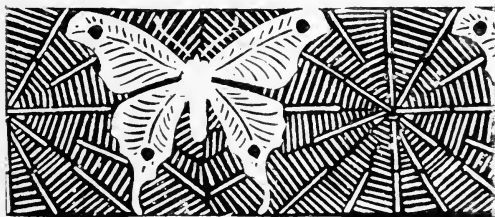
patterns, for it is obvious that if we cut the alphabet, some letters, such as B, P and O, could not be produced did we not leave “ties” to keep the portions surrounded by the



No. 154.—Border, produced by embroidering Nos. A and B.

loops of the letters from falling out. In the diagram B, No. 151, we see how “ties” must be left if B is to be made into a stencil, and it follows, therefore, that in designing stencils

we must so arrange our pattern that these "ties" really do form part of the design, and in the other designs here given it will be found that this necessity of making the "ties" play their proper *rôle* is attended to.



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Nos. 155 and 156.—Variations of No. A, showing the effect of stencilling on a white and black ground.

But a stencil need not take the simple form No. 151. For instance, we could cut a sort of background suggested by a spider's web out of another piece of paper, No. 153, and by stencilling this first we should get the effect shown in

No. 154. It will be noticed that a pattern is also cut to give variety to the butterflies, but it is obvious that this would



No. 157.—Feather Border,  
requiring plates 158 and  
159 to produce it.



No. 158.

have to be stencilled *after* the butterflies have been stencilled, so that to effect this design, No. 154, it would necessitate three operations: first the butterflies, second the background,



third the sprigs and pattern on butterflies. Of course, different colours could be used in each operation so that we could obtain considerable variety of colour by having two stencil

plates to produce the complete effect.

In continuous patterns we need something to guide us as to the placing of the stencils so that they follow on at equal distances. To this end cut just a small portion of the repeat, say the flower and some of the leaves of the sprig to the left of the impression. By placing this over the impression just stencilled you can fit the plate exactly every time it has to be shifted. In the case of the butterflies either the body or a corner of the wing would act as a guide for placing the plate. This applies equally where two or



No. 159.

more plates are required to produce a pattern. You must cut in each plate some two or more forms to act as guides in placing the stencils; thus in No. 160 the centre of the flowers and the eye of the fish act as guides in placing the stencil-plates.

Other variations of the stencil are shown in Nos. 155 and 156, for not only is the sprig omitted, but in one case the pattern is on a white ground and in the other on a dark one. By a little dodging several variations of a pattern may be obtained.

The feather border, No. 157, is the result of the combination of the plates 158 and 159.

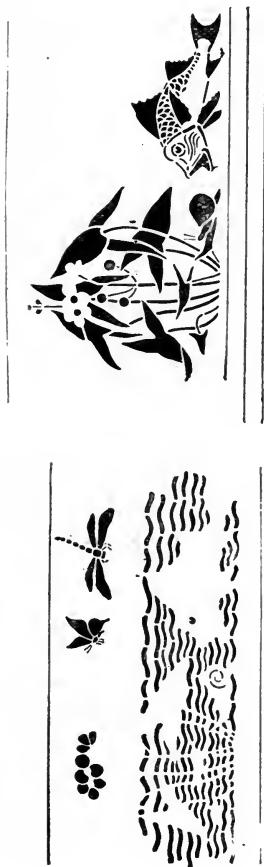
With skill and care quite elaborate patterns can be produced by stencilling, and many colours may be introduced. Almost any form can be cut as a stencil, the human figure itself not excepted, though it is a question whether it is not putting a somewhat severe strain upon stencil-cutting to treat the human form as a stencil-plate. But birds, fish, and insects are very effective if appropriately treated. In No. 160 we have a repeating border, in which fish and insects are prominent features. Two plates are necessary, and these are shown on a smaller scale in Nos. 161 and 162. Birds can easily be adapted from Japanese drawings, two of such adaptations being given in Nos. 163 and 164, which are good instances of the translation of forms by the method of stencilling. There are many designs scattered through these pages which could be easily adapted for stencil cutting.

In No. 165 a stencilled wall-hanging is shown. The design is very simple, a quaint ship and lines suggesting water. Stencilling is very effective on any woven fabric, and either liquid dyes or oil-colour thinned with spirits of turpentine

can be used. In the case of dyes the fabric must be light, say canvas, and if the transparent oil colours, such as Prus-



No. 160.— Continuous Border of arrowhead, fish, and insects, requiring J and K to produce it.



No. 161.

No. 162.

sian blue, raw sienna, burnt sienna and gamboge, be employed, made very thin with turpentine, they must also be

used on a light fabric. If a dark coloured textile be stencilled then the colours must be opaque or nearly so. Canvas thus stencilled makes excellent coverings for walls and for hanging in front of clothes-pegs to protect garments from dust.

#### USING STENCILS.

Stencilling can be done either in colours mixed with water



No. 163.—Flying Bird, adapted from Japanese drawing.

or oil. In the former case it is distemper that is employed, *i.e.*, whiting mixed with hot size and tinted with powder colours, such as can be obtained at any good oil shop or decorator's. Some colours can be had ground in water.

For the decoration of walls stencilling is admirable, as distemper is easily used, there being a

"tooth" to it, and the colour sinks in and dries quickly; consequently a sharper impression can be obtained in distemper than in oil. In mixing distemper colours it must be borne in mind that they dry very much lighter than they appear when wet, and it is a good plan to try them on paper and dry them quickly by a fire to see how they look then. A frieze running round the wall under the cornice

is a good way of decorating it, and small patterns can be stencilled on the wall in addition—powdered over the wall, as it is termed.

In stencilling in oil you must mix up your colours, thinning them to the consistency of thick cream. The main point to be observed in using stencils is to get the impressions sharp. The colour has a slight tendency to work underneath the plates and this is especially the case if the colour be used too thinly.

The brushes are short in the hair and made expressly for the purpose. Do not fill them too full, but by taking a little colour and knocking the brush on the palette to distribute it over the brush you avoid the danger of the colour spreading and so producing a blurred impression. Be very careful not to get too much water or turpentine in the brushes, or disaster will follow.



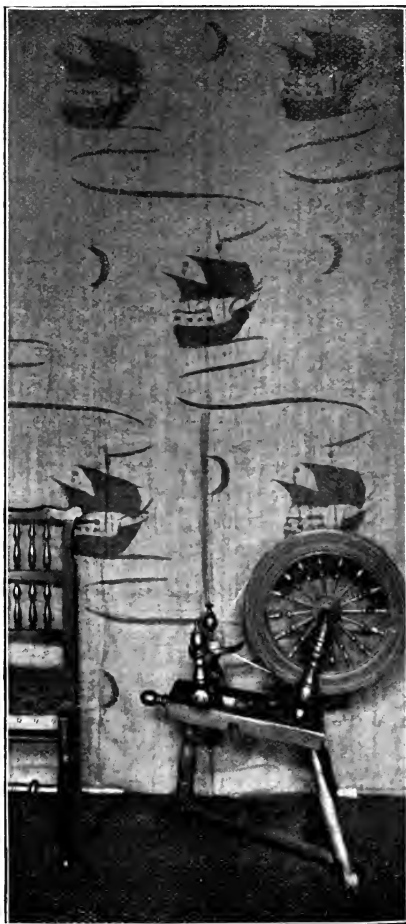
No. 164.—Flying Bird, adapted from Japanese drawing.

It is possible to slightly vary the tints used instead of getting each impression mechanically the same. The best way to effect this is to have the tinting colours in batches on the palette and a lot of white also ; you can then take a little of the colour in the brush, and just dip it also in the

white, then knock the brush a few times on the palette to mix them before rubbing over the stencil-plate. In this way

you "break" the colour on the stencil and the effect is much better than if you always used the same colour throughout. It relieves stencilling of the mechanical to use colour in this way. A little practice will soon make anyone expert in varying the tints *ad infinitum*.

Hold the stencil with the left hand and with the right keep knocking the brush on the plate, working out the colour in this way rather than by rubbing it over the stencil. This particularly applies to a freshly charged brush, for when



No. 165.—Arras Wall Hangings in stencil.

you have taken up fresh colour you want to avoid getting too much out in one spot—rather, distribute it over a large surface.

It will be understood that more than one stencil-brush is required if more than one distinct colour is to be used. It is quite possible with a little care to work two or more colours on the same plate. For instance, the design No. 152 could have the butterflies in one tint, the leaves in another, and the flowers in a third. The green of the leaves is, of course, apt to work into the flowers unless you are very careful to avoid taking the green quite close up to the flowers; also you must not use brushes that are too large.

Every now and then examine your stencil plate and clean it on the back with a cloth, as with all your care colour will work under the plate. When you have finished with it thoroughly clean off all colour with warm water or turpentine and place the stencil between boards so that it is kept flat. Should any of the “ties” get broken off repair them by cutting narrow strips of varnished paper and sticking them over the damaged place with “knotting.” This will dry hard quickly and make a good join.

There are some “ties” which were left to strengthen the stencil and which cannot be made to form part of the design. Such “ties” must be filled in by hand if it is thought necessary, but many designs can be cut where no such strengthening ties are necessary. Of course, a stencil can be worked up by hand, but very good effects are obtainable without any hand work.

Stencilling can be done with gesso so as to produce the pattern in relief, and this can afterwards be tinted by hand.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### POKER WORK ON WOOD AND LEATHER.



IN the Paris Salon this last year was shown a chest of drawers in which the ornamentation was in poker work, and in addition colour was employed, and most excellent and original was the effect obtained by the combination.

Poker work alone is a very legitimate and effective way to ornament wood. Perhaps oak lends itself better to this treatment, though the example in the Salon just alluded to was done on pine, and where colour is to be used in combination a light wood is to be preferred. The class of design best suited to poker work is where the background can be burnt away, leaving the forms in flat-relief; such a pattern, for instance, as the Vine No. 7, page 16, could be well wrought in poker work, or the quaint renderings of fish and other animal forms scattered through these pages could be adapted for the purpose, particularly those from the Japanese given in the chapter on "Animal Forms in Decoration," for here we have effects obtained by a well-defined outline, and what detail there is is of an ornamental character.

Poker work is, I am aware, often used for producing





No. 166.—Sketch of a Panel in the Prince's Restaurant, designed by Mr. H. C. Brewer. This ship and the one in next illustration are taken from seventeenth century vessels.

the effect of a pen drawing such as No. 166, though this was not drawn for such reproduction, and, skilfully handled, a "poker" could be made to yield a very effective result; but then Mr. Brewer's panel is a very good example of what a decorative design should be, and a good and appropriate design is a long way towards success. I cannot think that imitating line engravings in poker work is likely to lead to any marked success, though one often sees efforts made in this direction. My feeling is for a much more robust kind of design, one in which the outline does most of the work, as in the two admirable ship arrangements, Nos. 166 and 167. Here we have the shapes telling as light spaces on a dark ground. Shadows are only hinted at, and there is nothing I conceive that could not adequately be rendered in poker work.

In a friend's house I have seen a table, some low chairs, and a hanging cabinet all decorated by his sister in poker work, and being done with judgment and taste the effect on the dark oak was quite admirable. Until seeing these examples I did not realise what could be done with a pyrometer. In all cases the designs were simple, flat renderings of plant form, the white lily in one case, with the background burnt away: no great difficulties were attempted, no complicated pieces of foreshortening, but what was done was quite craftsmanlike, and therefore satisfying.

By a poker one naturally means a properly-contrived apparatus in which the point is kept heated by spirit. They are sometimes known as Pyrometers, and can be purchased from 12s. to 18s. Heating an iron rod in the fire is too primitive an arrangement for any satisfactory results to be obtained.

Unless one is very certain of one's touch, and can trust



No. 167.—Sketch of Panel in Prince's Restaurant, designed by  
Mr. H. C. Brewer

oneself to work spontaneously, it is advisable to make the design to be wrought on paper, and in doing this bear in mind that the pyrometer is not a pen, and that to attempt to get the effect of cross hatching or minute work of this nature is outside the scope of the craft. Let the forms be well defined and not too minute or complicated, and let there be plenty of spaces left almost plain. It is a great mistake to cover every part of the wood with work, for you do not obtain relief where all parts of the surface are similarly treated. In doing leaves, for instance, go for their characteristic shapes, but avoid putting much veining or other markings on them and so lose breadth. The midrib and one or two other important traits may be indicated, but do not be afraid of leaving plain spaces. In the same way do not be afraid of lumps of black, that is, those portions which are burnt away, for they are very effective, and help to bring out the shape of the design. Such objects as the fine old seventeenth-century vessels and heraldry would make capital subjects for panels, and though Mr. Brewer executed this work in oils, I have put two of his designs in this chapter because they seem to be more suggestive of poker work than anything I could do myself. Materials for such panels can be found in old engravings and also in models in museums, while heraldry is frequently met with and is full of decorative opportunities, the scroll-like foliage lending itself to poker treatment. Were anyone carrying out such designs as 166 or 167, it would be desirable to leave out the finer pen-work indicating shading, and also some of the details of the ships. The white line, too, left around some of the forms should be omitted, as it tends to confuse the design, which is quite full enough without adding to it.



No. 168.—Design by Miss Constance Foxley, which could easily be adapted for poker work, the lines being simple and decided and the dark spaces giving relief to the composition.

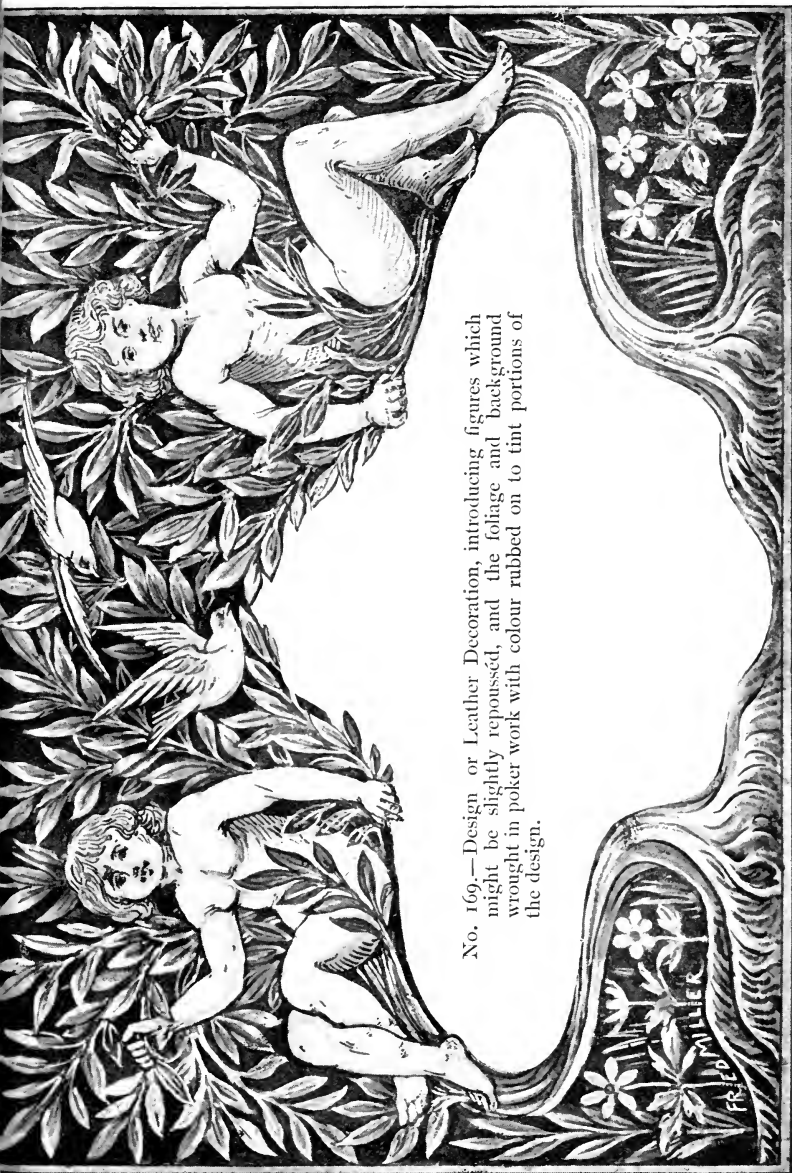
Many valuable suggestions for elaborate poker work could, I think, be obtained from a study of some of Albert Durer's engravings; such an one, for instance, as

the heraldic device with the cock crowing. Photographic reproductions of most of his work can now be obtained.

On light wood finer work can be attempted, and I have seen some poker-work panels which were very elaborate and none the less effective. Cupids carrying festoons of flowers were the leading *motifs*, and colour was introduced more as a stain than as pigment; for on white wood water-colours can be used as a stain. Colour can certainly be introduced with considerable effect in combination with poker work, and some interesting experiments might be made by rubbing colour into some of the burnt lines, and then take the surplus off with a rag, in this way getting accidental effects which are often far before any that are designedly done.

Such a design as No. 168, though drawn originally as a tail-piece, is conceived in quite the right way for poker work, as the outlines are few and decided, and the black background gives a certain sculpturesque quality to the figures and details.

Thick undyed leather can be effectively decorated with poker work, and an artist friend showed me a couple of panels in which he had carried out two of Teniers' compositions. The main lines of the pictures were executed with the pyrometer, just as though you made a tracing of the pictures in outline, and where a mass of shadow came it was burnt in, and then the colour of the original pictures was suggested by rubbing on oil colour and wiping off the surplus. The warm yellow-brown of the leather gave a rich tone to the colour, and produced a most harmonious result. No attempt was made to obtain a copy of the pictures, but only a translation or paraphrase as it were. I have seen other examples of leather



No. 169.—Design or Leather Decoration, introducing figures which might be slightly repoussé, and the foliage and background wrought in poker work with colour rubbed on to tint portions of the design.

FRED MILLER

decorated in this way with more ornamental patterns, and those readers who have only tried poker work on wood will be glad of the suggestion to essay effects on leather, as the surface and colour of undyed cowhide lends itself to a decorative scheme. In the Paris Exhibition were to be seen some most admirable effects produced by poker work on leather; in fact, it appeared to be a favourite method of decorating leather. In some cases the design was outlined by the poker, and then the design repousséd or punched in from the front. The leather employed was invariably of the nature of cow-hide, and was light brown in colour. Stains were used to give colour to the patterns in some cases with considerable effect.

Various combinations suggest themselves, such as beaten or *repoussé* leather and poker work, but these I must leave to the reader to carry out for himself. Design No. 169, for instance, if wrought on a larger scale, would lend itself to the dual treatment, the figures being beaten up slightly, and the foliage and accessories burnt on. A little colour would greatly help the design.

Purely geometrical patterns and arabesques could be effectively reproduced with a pyrometer, and then colour and gilding could be added.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### DECORATIVE PAINTING FOR ROOMS AND FURNITURE.



AS a concluding chapter to this work it may not be considered quite outside our subject to devote it to the treatment of flat surfaces by painted decoration, for elsewhere we have considered decoration in relief and by stencilling.

By decorative painting I take it one means painting which does not exist apart from the surface decorated. A picture is the individual expression of an idea, and exists for itself alone, and therefore without reference to its surroundings; but a piece of painted decoration is conditioned by its environment and the purpose to which it is put. Thus an artist might be called upon to paint the panels of a cabinet, and could bring as much skill and knowledge to bear upon the work as in his pictures, and yet it will not consist of pictures made to fit the spaces to be painted, but of work designed and carried out to keep its place in the general scheme. No hard-and-fast line can be drawn between the various forms of painted art, and a painting is not necessarily decorative because it has a line put round all the forms, but because due attention is paid to fitness, and due restraint exhibited in carrying out the design, so that too much attention is not paid to the decoration which would

destroy the balance and upset the harmony of the whole scheme. The skill necessary to paint a passable cabinet picture such as would find a place in a good exhibition, is not often possessed by amateurs, whereas, by working in a humbler and simpler style, such as painting the panels of a cabinet, many could succeed in such decorative work, for here the delicacy of perception, subtle definition and masterly handling required in pictorial art give place to a much less exacting treatment. Take, for instance, Mr. Louis Davis's painted retable, No. 170. The charm of colour of the original is barely indicated in the reproduction, though the general arrangement and colour scheme is suggested. The effect aimed at is broader, flatter and severer than would be the case were the artist painting a cabinet picture. Then the background is arbitrarily treated, and the thorns painted upon it are quite ornamental. A certain amount of light and shade is employed to give relief, but not the subtle play of half tone, with all its delicate gradations, that is thought necessary in a picture. A certain sculpturesque quality, too, is seen, which makes the work effective when viewed at a distance. There are plenty of difficulties to be overcome here, but not so many or such subtle ones as there would be were the artist realizing a figure seen under particular conditions of light, where one plane melts into another and where the sense of atmosphere has to be suggested. Or take the two panels, No. 171, portion of the decoration of a pianoforte front. Here the artist has designed an arrangement of lines and spaces and given the panels a strongly asserted character which is pleasing or the reverse as individual taste decides. There is no attempt here to realise the effect of a figure singing in a room with all the delicate play of light and shade around it, but a figure



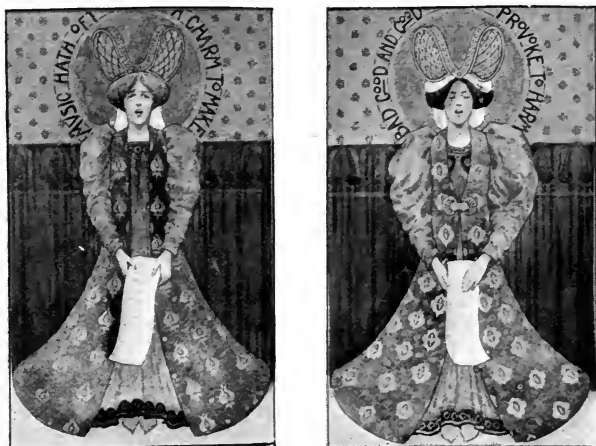
No. 170.—Painting on Retable. All Hallows Church, Southwark.  
By Louis Davis.

is arranged to fit a certain space, and instead of subtle light and shade the subject is viewed in an arbitrary way, so that

such difficulties are avoided, and by treating the work in a flat manner and drawing in all the forms definitely with an outline the difficulties of handling are considerably lessened and consequently are much more easily grappled with. In carrying out such panels the flesh might be kept a flat tint, and in the face only so much shadow put under the chin as to obtain relief. A tint might be mixed up of, say, white, vermilion and yellow ochre, to give a warm, reddish tone of colour, and this could be put on flatly and the shadow stippled on with a badger; indeed, it would give a nice texture to stipple the whole when you have got the colour on the panel. The shadow could be made by adding a little light red and black to the flesh tint. When this is dry the features could be transferred with carbon paper, and then put in with light red, using a "rigger" to do this. Here, you see, we adopt methods to lessen difficulties, for to attempt to get the appearance of flesh demands much more skill and knowledge than is necessary to paint a decorative panel: we attempt to succeed in a humbler effort rather than fail in a difficult one. The hair could be kept a golden brown, and the drapery put in flatly. The shadows on the sleeves, to render the folds, should be put in a darker tint of the same colour, say apple green. The pattern on the dress would have to be put on when the colour is dry, and a small stencil could be cut to do it. In this way the whole design is mapped out, and the colouring is not unlike putting colours on a map. In fact, we deliberately map out our work and plan it as a shape instead of attempting to realise it pictorially, and by thus making a pattern of our subject we give it a certain quaint character which keeps it in the position it occupies, such as a pianoforte front.

It is always a good plan to make a careful drawing of the

design to be carried out before commencing work, and then make a tracing of it, so that you can transfer it as the work progresses. There should be no bungling or hesitancy when the actual painting is begun, for the more direct you work the better.



No. 171.—The two end panels of the decorated part of a pianoforte, by H. G. Theaker, Royal College of Art.

If you wish to enlarge a design, the easiest way to do this is by “squaring.” You divide the drawing up into, say, half-inch squares, and then on your paper you mark squares the size necessary to bring your pattern to the required dimensions. Thus, if you want to enlarge it to double the size, then your paper must be divided up into inch squares. To reduce a drawing work in the reverse way. It is a comparatively easy task to fill in the squares each with its corresponding part of the design, and in this way you insure getting a *fac simile* of the original so far as proportion is concerned.

In symmetrical patterns you have only to fold a piece of paper in two and draw one half of the design in pencil; then by rubbing the plain half of the paper on to the drawn half you obtain a faint impression of it, and so get both sides alike.

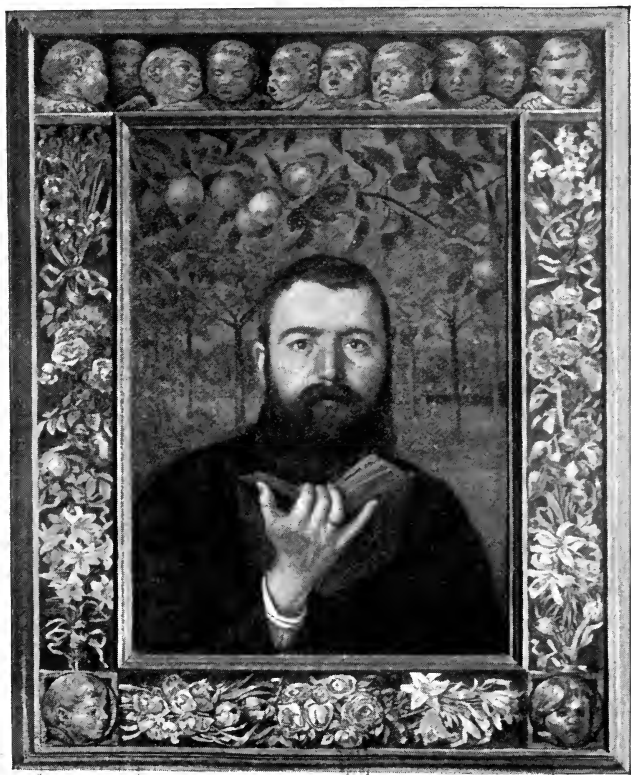
For transferring a pattern to be repeated many times "pouncing" is the easiest method to adopt. You prick



No. 172.—Decorative Panel, by Mr. H. C. Brewer.

over the design with a needle upon a piece of flannel, and it is better to do this on the reverse side; so make your design on tracing paper. The needle holes should be fairly close together, like the perforation on postage stamps. Some crushed charcoal or powdered chalk put up in fine muslin and rubbed over the pricked pattern or pounce will leave an impression behind it which can be outlined with a

fine brush to fix it, unless you can work it straight away in colour, for, of course, the powder easily dusts off. This method of "pouncing" is the one always employed by



No. 173.—Portrait of Hans Thoma, in decorated frame.

decorators where the repetition of a pattern is necessary. These "tips" may seem very obvious and trite to many readers, but I remember the time when I would have given

a good deal to have known of them. It is for the want of this kind of knowledge that amateurs bungle so sadly.

The introduction of gold and platinum in a decorative scheme is often very helpful, and with a little practice amateurs can do this well enough to pass muster. Ordinary gilding is done by covering the surface to be gilded with gold size, which can be had at a decorator's. This is usually put on the day before the gold is applied, as the size must be nearly dry before it is ready for the gold-leaf. This should be taken up by a "tip," and gilders turn out the sheets of gold-leaf on to a leather pad, which has cardboard sides to keep the gold-leaf from blowing away. Some amount of gold will doubtless be wasted at first, until you get used to handling it. If the sheets of gold-leaf require cutting a special knife is used for the purpose, and the gold is taken up with the "tip," which is just passed over the hair; and gilders keep their hair well greased, so that the "tip" just takes up enough grease to make the gold-leaf adhere by its edges to the "tip." There is a "transfer" gold sold which slightly adheres to the paper it is put between, and you take up a sheet of the paper upon which is the gold-leaf, and press this on to the gold size, the gold adhering when you peel away the paper. This transfer gold is easier to manipulate than the ordinary leaf, which has to be applied, as I have said, with a "tip."

Decoration looks well on a gilded ground, and some beautiful effects are obtainable by using transparent oil colour mixed with varnish on the gold, for the metal showing through the colour produces a wonderfully rich effect. William Morris, in some of the decorations he designed for St. James's Palace, used transparent colours on a gold ground with fine effect. The grape was the *motif*,



and the leaves and fruit were outlined in a solid colour, like Indian red, and then, when dry, the greens and purples were put on thinly with varnish. Copal is the best to use, as it dries very hard.

A word may here be said as to the mixing of oil colours



No. 174.—St. Cecilia. By Hans Thoma, in decorated frame.

for decorative purposes. Where much colour is required it is cheaper to buy pound tubes of decorators' colours. If these are thinned with a little turpentine and a small

quantity of copal they will dry hard and fairly quickly. Linseed and other oil should as a general rule be avoided, as the colours are then so much longer in drying. If colours are thinned with a little turpentine only they dry almost dead, but the work can be varnished afterwards.

There has been a revival in painted furniture, and as it is such a capital way of using one's labour, amateurs might profitably turn their attention in this direction.

The furniture, if it be made expressly for decorating, should only be partially polished, and it should be understood by the maker that it is intended to be painted, as due allowance will then be made. The decoration should be done in oil colours, and you cannot do better than use a little turpentine and varnish as a vehicle, but don't overdo the varnish as it is an advantage that the colour dries dead, as the brilliancy is restored by the polishing. Use the colours evenly, and avoid lumping them on in parts, as when French-polished roughnesses in the colour look bad. The polishing must be done by a professional, for a tricky business is French-polishing, and few amateurs succeed at it. This polishing over the decoration gives it a fine quality.

Painted furniture can be most effectively decorated. On a white ground the decoration can be in delicate tones, and transparent colours used. I remember seeing a grand-piano case the decoration of which was designed by William Morris. It consisted of a conventionalised flowering tree running over and covering the whole surface. The colours, quiet greens with pinkish flowers, were put on thinly and semi-transparently; the forms having been previously outlined in burnt sienna. The work was then varnished and polished, and looked very choice. Light decoration on a

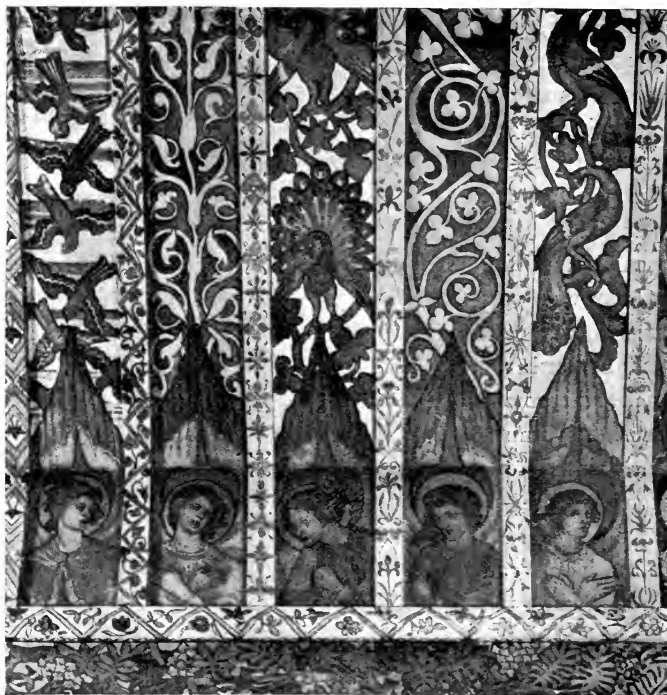
dark ground comes well. A corner cupboard I saw in a studio was painted a dull sage green, quite dark, and some simple patterns in light yellows and golden browns were painted on the panels, and the whole was varnished, and looked particularly rich and harmonious. In varnishing painted work you require a broad brush, so that you can quickly cover the surface. Use the varnish freely, but well brush it on so that no holes are left unvarnished. Do *not* touch the varnish when it has begun to set, and keep it



No. 175.—One of the panels in the Prince's Restaurant. By H. C. Brewer.

away from dust while drying. For large works buy your varnish by the pint : a good hard drying varnish, white for light work, and darker for dark work, should be used.

Picture and mirror frames, if properly designed, give the



No. 176.—Detail of Roof in north aisle, Catholic Apostolic Church, Edinburgh. Mrs. Traquair.

decorator an opportunity of displaying his talent. The two very original decorated frames by Hans Thoma, Nos. 173 and 174, are worth studying, for they are very daring in treatment. The festoons of flowers in No. 173 are modelled

upon florid Renaissance work, and it is a class of design very suitable for using on polished furniture. The flowers



No. 177.—Painted Pilasters in the Prince's Restaurant. Designed by Mr. H. C. Brewer.

themselves are painted fairly naturally, the various groups being held together by ribbons. In the other frame, No. 174, the artist has gone for a severer treatment, and by the appearance of the reproduction it looks as though gesso had been used to procure relief.

In these two examples we can see the difference between painting a picture of flowers and using flowers to decorate a surface. Were we to go in a garden or place a group of flowers in a vase in a room and attempt to realize them and their surroundings we should have to suggest the atmosphere, the melting of one plane into another, the subtle play of light and shade, and endless other nice distinctions; whereas, if we paint the same flowers on a polished or plain wood panel or gilt ground, we at once approach our work from a different point of view, and by only having form and local colour, that is the colour of the objects themselves and not as they change with the varying light, to think of what we have to do is much more graspable and, therefore, easier of accomplishment.

We see how a decorator approaches the subject in the long panel, No. 175, by Mr. H. C. Brewer, which is a portion of the decorative scheme in the Prince's Restaurant. The water, as well as the ships, is ornamentalised, line and shape being thought of before atmospheric effect. The vessels themselves are fairly accurate renderings of seventeenth-century ships, a period when some of the most beautiful vessels, having regard to shape, were built.

We can get much further removed from naturalism than the examples hitherto considered in this chapter indicate; much nearer the purely ornamental, as in the scheme for a roof, No. 176. Painting simple ornamental patterns is very good practice in learning to manipulate colour, and the tyro

**P**iangete, amati, poichè piange  
 Amore, Ulaendo qual ragione  
 tu fa piangere? E l'huor sente a pietà donne  
 chiamare. **M**ostrando amaro duol per  
 gli occhi fuore; **P**erchè villana morte in  
 gentil core? **Q**uasi il suo crudele adop  
 erare, **S**uastando ciò che al mondo è da  
 lodare. **I**n gentil donna, fuora dell'onore,  
 Uidete quanti Amor le fece orraza. **C**h  
 io l'vidi lamentare in forma vera  
 sopra la morta immagine avvenente  
 riguardava inver lo ciel sovente,  
 ve l'alma gentil già locata era,  
 he donna fu di sì gata scribiata.

**Sonetto Terzo ■**

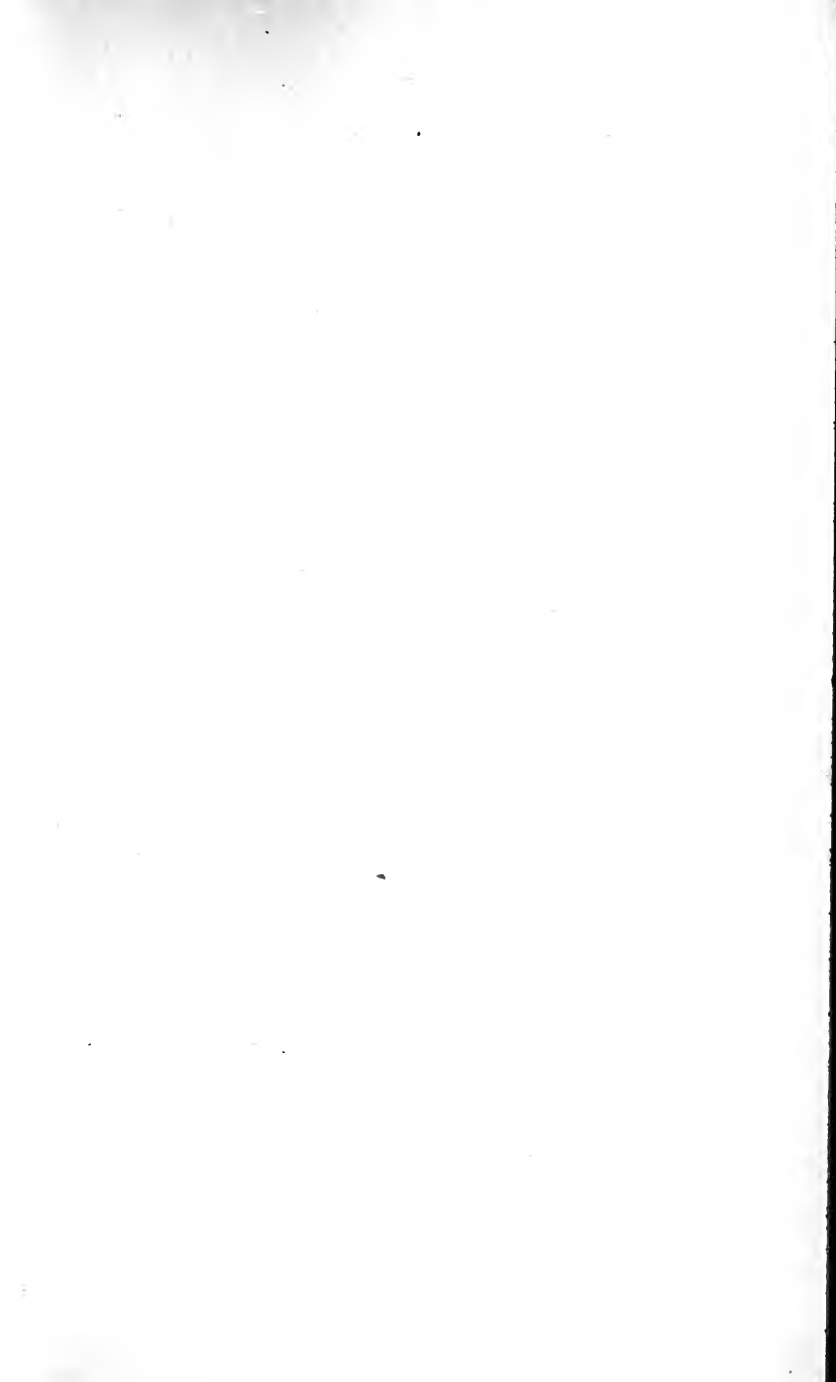


No. 178.—An Illuminated Page containing a sonnet by Dante.  
 By Mrs. Traquair.

would do well to try his hand at such work. The Renaissance pilasters, No. 177, are more difficult than the flatter patterns in No. 176, as the sense of roundness has to be given to this class of ornament, designed by Mr. Brewer.

Illuminating books is a very beautiful form of painted decoration, and one that may well secure the attention of the amateur. Much in the way of colour and design can be learnt from the old missals in the British Museum, for illuminating was the appropriate art of the Middle Ages, and what they didn't know touching this subject isn't worth knowing. Still there is no reason why there should be any slavish copying of old work. Mrs. Traquair, in the example of one of her illuminated pages, No. 178, has put her *ego* into it, and at the same time there is quite the spirit of the best old work as well. Brilliant colour should, I think, be the note in illumination, and there are delightful opportunities for design and fancy in initial letters and borders. Inventing lettering is a difficult undertaking, and it would be worth the expenditure to those taking up illuminating to buy a book of "Alphabets." An illuminated page is spoilt if the lettering itself is not well designed and executed, and in proportion to the rest of the decoration. Vellum is a much more beautiful material to work on than paper.





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